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GOVERNMENT OF TRIPURA, AGARTALA

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Foreword

It is a privilege to publish Seminar Papers presented by the scholars during the National Seminar on "Empowerment of Tribal Women" jointly organized by Tribal Research & Cultural Institute, Goverment of Tripura and Women's College, Agartala on 13-14 th February, 2015 at Women's College, Agartala. Many renowned academicians, scholars from and outside Tripura attended the Seminar and presented their valuable papers.

I hope these collections of seminar paper in a book form will be of immense help to the readers, researchers, administrators as well as the scholars.

I also congratulate the editors of this book Smt. Lili Debbarma and Dr. Somali Saha, Asstt. Professor, Women's College, Agartala for their painstaking efforts and dynamism for editing this volume so brilliantly or else this venture might not have seen the light of the day.

10.02.2017

Dated, Agartala
The 10th February, 2017

(S. Debbarma)
Director,
Tribal Research & Cultural institute,
Govt. of Tripura.

Foreword

It is an established fact that the women are victims of discrimination all over the world in different phases of their lives. The educationists and the sociologists have rightly suggested that empowerment of women is the key to ensure overall wellbeing of the women in the present day world. There can be no denial to the fact that the problem of empowerment of the tribal women in this context deserves special attention as they remained out side the purview of the mainstream of our national culture for ages.

Empowerment is a process of transformation of power from strong to weaker. It is a multi dimensional concept which enables an individual or a society to assert their full identity and powers in different shapes of their lives. So the issues of empowerment of tribal women encompasses the status of women, their level of education, scale of employment, ownership of property, participation in trade and commerce, level of self confidence, political right and above all their right to decision making and their psychological well being. In is quite interesting to note that in most of the aforesaid fields the tribal women are equally discriminated against like their counterpart non-tribal women. It is, however, true that in social field the tribal women enjoy better due to their matrilinear system of society and absence of dowry.

The eminent scholars who are contributors to this valuable compilation work have rightly earmarked the field of education as the most vulnerable area which needs special attention to ensure attainment of self confidence, dignity and eradication of poverty. In the field of wage earning and decision making in the society the tribal women are discriminated against similar to the non-tribal women. The problems that are

associated with the issue of empowerment of tribal women are multi farious and include, inter alia, education, employment, power of decision making, equal remuneration with male, trade and commerce, improved standard of living, good health, medical facilities etc. In a nutshell, it can be said that the empowerment of tribal women is the personality growth of tribal woman in totality.

The contributors of this compilation work deserve high appreciation and thanks for enriching the thoughts of all interested scholars and academics.

I hope this work will be useful to academicians, research scholar & students of different disciplines It may serve as a hand book for the policy maker, planner, administration, social worker, NGO functionaries & many more in order to enolve policies pertaining to women empowerment in general & tribal women empowerment in particular in Tripura in the North Eastern Region of India. I take this opportunity to congratulate the editors for bringing out such a fascinating volume on a topic of contemporary relevance.

Manidipa Deb Barma
Principal
Women's College
Agartala

Editorial Note

Tripura, one of the culturally and anthropologically unique states of India, houses a number of ethnic and linguistic groups of people with their age-old socio cultural practices. Tribals of Tripura who form a significant proportion of the total population of the state, are known for their freedom-loving nature and like other tribal societies in the different parts of India, the women of Tripura tribes are playing bigger socio-economic role in their respective societies.

But it is a well-documented fact that every society manifests some forms and degree of gender discrimination. Women who generally constitute about half of the human race, are subjected to subordination with respect to power structure which further brings marginalization in rights to education, employment, land and property, food and health services. The ethnic groups of Tripura containing both tribal and non-tribal categories, though claim to maintain an egalitarian social status, the increasing gender ratio gaps, gaps over prop-

erty rights and an imbalanced ratio in representations in power structure, have consequenced in a rather critical scenerio. The presence of both patriarchal and matrilineal societies and a vast majority of rural polulation with a smaller proportion of urban populace are promoting inequalities and biasness among themselves affecting their past and present, also bearing implication on their future-thereby challenging the empowerment of these tribal women down the ages.

In recent years, the empowerment of woman has been recognized as a central issue in determining their status. Now raising the status of tribal women in not just a moral imperative but also a strategic one. The development policies, laws, plans and programmes of our country are aiming at the empowerment of women in different spheres. The national seminar "Empowerment of Tribal Women" organized by Women's College in collaboration with Tribal Research and cultural Institute, Govt of Tripura, has attempted to review the overall situation of tribal women, especially of Tripura. The central concern of the papers deliberated in the seminar has been the issues, economic as well as mental problems of the women and understanding the level of empowerment of these women in respect of power structure, education, occupation, employment etc. Issues like understanding the effect of different schemes for empowering tribal women and mapping out some strategies for the empowerment of these women have also been focused in some of the articles.

This journal consists of 26 papers and begins with the key note address by Khakchang Debbarma to introduce and focus on various issues related to the empowerment of tribal women. Analysing the issues of empowerment in detail, Prof Debbarma has highlighted different aspects of women's empowerment specially of economic empowerment and also analysed the role of education in the empowerment of tribal women. He felt the need of the state to develop a motivating plan for women's development, central to which would be normative, procedural and funding changes to implement the commitments to women's empowerment, equality and gender justice.

Dr. Abhijit Sarkar and Dr. Prithwi Jyoti Bhowmik in their paper "Status of Tribal Women in Tripura-An Exploration From the Perspective of Economic Activities" have attempted to explore the status of tribal women from the point of economic activity. Their search aims to find the answer of the question 'Whether the tribal Women in the state today are better placed from the perspective of economic activity undertaken by them compared to earlier years.'

The paper "Visible Labour, Invisible Wage : Tribal Women's Contribution in Household Economy Through Unpaid Work" which is the outcome of the joint attempt of Arindam Ghosh, Dipankar Chatterjee and Rudrajit Sarkar, reflects the neglect of women's economic contributions to the household by the society. The purpose of the researchers was to quantify women's invisible household work and to assess an approximate economic value for their labour.

In assessing the empowerment of tribal women, it is compulsory to judge their psychological well-being. The article of Dr Arpita Acharya "Phychological Well-being of Women : A study Among the Bengali, Tribal and Manipuri Community of Tripura" is an endeavour to study the psychological well-being of women of some of the major communities of Tripura. Her research in this area reveals that tribal and Bengali women possess significantly higher scores in several factors than Manipuri women of this state.

Dr. Anjana Bhattacharjee's article "Fostering Positive

Mental Health and Empowering Tribal Girl Students of Tripura:An Empirical Analysis"in another attempt to investigate mental health status of tribal girl students of Tripura and to compare their mental health status with their Non tribal counterparts. Her paper suggests some measures for fostering positive mental health among the tribal girls and hence empowering them so that they can gain knowledge, skills and attitude needed to cope with the changing world and circumstances and thus make them able to take very active role in the overall development of tribal community.

The article "Transforming the Power of Tribal Women in Tripura Through Self Help Groups : A Critical Focus" is an attempt of Dr. Bimal Kishore Acharya to examine the socio-economic status or tribal women as well as to analyse the role and impact of SHG's in transforming the power of tribal women in Tripura.

Dr. Jyotirmoy Sharma in his paper "Tribal Women Empowerment : Scopes in Traditional Cultural and System in Tripura" attempts to highlight the rich provisions existing in the rural surroundings of Tripura, cultivation of which may lead the rural tribal women to the horizon of economic development. Dr Sharma also makes a search for the ways to conserve the rich culture of household economy of the tribes of Tripura in the recent hightech era.

In the paper "The Queens of Tripura : Women Beyond the Epoch" Ratnabali Roy Sengupta mentions the queens of the Manikya family as the true representatives of the rich culture and society of Tripura. An attempt has been made by her to understand the degree of the mingling of two different cultural processes and the influence of these processes on the self empowered queens of the royal family along with their contribution for uplifting the status of the tribal women in the present society.

In the article "Empowerment of Tribal Women in North-East India :A Subaltern Study", by Dr Prasanta Chakraborty and Somali Saha have referred some taboos among the tribes of North-east India to give a glimpse of the status of women in their societies. They have also attempted to unveil the patriarchal constraints practised by the people of North-eastern tribes under the coating of matrilineality.

Education in the tribal areas has always been a matter of great concern and the lack of it always has a brutal impact on the development of the tribal women. Debabrata Bhattacharjee and Pradip Dey's joint venture "Role of Education in Empowering Tribal Women : A Study" aims to find out the effect of educationa on tribal women.Their study tries to find out the status of women in present society along with the attitude of parents and guardians towards girls' education as well as the problem associated with the empowerment of women.

The article "Educational Achievement and Self-Esteem of College Students : A Comparative Study Between the Tribal and Non tribal Girl Students of Agartala" is the joint attempt of Dipankar Pal, Dr. Soma Sengupta and Dr. Arpita Acharya which compares the level of educational achievement of tribal and non-tribal girl students who are studying in different colleges of Agartala. Their research paper also suggests some measures particularly for female tribal students to improve their mental health which will in turn help them to achieve academic success as well as to enhance their self esteem level, so that they will be able to adjust more adequately with the outer world.

Dr.Pradeep Kumar Deepak in his paper "Empowerment through Education Among Tribal Women of Tripura" attempts

to justify the over-all impact of tribal women's education in Tripura by which the women empowerment in case of tribal women can be achieved.His paper also explains in detail about the social, cultural and economic impacts of the lives of tribal women of Tripura, which is the outcome of their backwardness in Education.

The article "Empowerment of Tribal Women Through Education: A Study of the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission, Khonsa, Arunachal Pradesh' is a joint attempt of Prof. Satyadeo Podder and Nirmalya Karmakar which studies how Ramakrishna Sarada Mission, Khonsa has travelled a long way since it began its journey 35 years ago. This paper shows how this school, with an initial enrolment of 58 students in 1973, in the classes-Preparatory, class I&II, has now blossomed into a full-fledged residential school mainly catering to the all-round development of the tribal girl students of Arunachal Pradesh.

As far as the actual empowerment of tribal women is conerned, they are in need of financial assistance for performing various economic activities. The paper "Tribal Women Empowerment through Financial Inclusion" by Sunirmal Biswas is prepared on the basis of data collected through primary and secondary sources that reveal the nature of financial literacy and accessibility of financial service by the tribal women in the selected study area of Tripura. It also suggests findings and valuable recommendation towards strengthening the socio-economic condition of the tribal women.

Dr Swapna Biswas in her article " Empowerment of Tribal Women in Tripura" studies the socio-economic status of tribal women in Tripura.She also attempts to anaylse the participation of tribal women in political activities of Tripura.She also makes an urge for constitutional provisions, governmental policies, social action, establishment of social safety and awareness of the rural tirbals together to provide the tribals with necessary stills to enjoy equal opportunity and thereby enhance the status of the tribals of Tripura through political empowerment.

The paper "Status and Empowerment of Tribal Women of Tripura Pre-Period and Post-Period of Merging with India- A hope for the Mission" is an attempt of Monoranjan Das in finding out the status and empowement of tribal women of Tripura in the fields of socio-economic, political, educational and cultural area. Chalking out problem to get the equal status status and empowerment with male counterpart and suggesting some measures in solving the increasing problems in also done in this paper. In another paper entitled, "A study on the Overall situation of Tribal Women, Especially in the State of Tripura" Mahua Choudhury's effort is to understand the variety, the changes that have occured among the tribal women and the evolution of their customary law in response to them. Her attempt is also to analyse the educational status of tribal women of Tripura.

The joint paper entiled "Participation of Tribal Women workers and Perceptions of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Gurarantce Act." contributed by Dr. Prithwi Jyoti Bhowmik and Dr. Abhijit Sarkar is focussed around a review of 1060 MGNREGA workers led in May- June 2012 in undivided four districts of Tripura. Their article concentrates on the female tribal labourers in the example to highlight the effect of the MGNREGA in the lives of female workers.

Ratan Debbarma in his paper "To Discuss the Problem of Tribal Women (Tripura)" purports to focus how women's empowerment in India as well as in Tripura is heavily depen-

dent on many different variables that include geographical location, educational status, caste, class etc. To get rid of all the critical problems faced by tribal women, he emphasizes on the wide spread awereness programme and the initiatives of both Govt and Non-govt. organizations to guide these women to reach their own destinations successfully.

Gender equity among the tribal groups is a complex phenomenon that needs to be addessed in the context of the empowerment of tribal women. The paper entittled 'Gender, Development and the Status of Tribal Women: A Study of Tripura" by Suman Ali, Taslima Akter focused the nature and dimensions of change in the lives and status of tribal women in Tripura. It also focuses how the socio-economic changes during the last few decades have introduced new gender and class issues into the purportedly egalitarian society of the tribals.

Based on the issues and challenges of empowerment of Tribal women the paper entitled. Empowerment of Tribal women in North-East : Issues and challenges " by Monica Debarma and Bina Debbarma reveals that although tribal women have proved that they have enormous potential in restoring and reconstructing community, today they are facing extreme forms of social exclusion and discrimination in the public spheres of life. The contributors feel that there is need to give them grass root level training and orientation in order to reinforce their motivation.

The joint attempt of Mr. Daniel Debbarma, Mr. Madhusudhan Murasing and Mr.Tirharam Reang titled. "Empowerment of Tribal Women Through Literacy in India with Special Reference to Tripura' not only provides an overview of trends and issues but also tries to identify relevant strategies to promote tribal women of the state of Tripura towards a better future. This paper also provides a framework which could serve as the reference model in the further study of tribal women in Tripura. The paper "A Review on the Status of Tribal women in Tripura" is a sole attempt of Mr. Daniel Debbarma which endeavours to explain those factors that are affecting tribal women of the state and also suggests measures of possible strategies for their empowerment. This paper also tries to look into the different aspects that shape up the status of tribal women in Tripura.

Ms. Nivedita Dam's paper "Indegenous People and Its Changing Face of Life (Status of Women in Uchoi Tribal)" is centered around a particular tribe, Uchoi who are on the verge of losing their own identily and are facing the threat of entinction in near future Ms Dam concludes her paper with some valuable suggestions in order to revive the lost glory of the Uchois so that they do not feel alien in their homeland.

Purbita Gupta in her article " Political Participation of Tribal Women in Village Committee-A study of Tripura" puts emphasiz on the active participation of women inespective of tribal and non-tribal for smoothening the decision making activity. She also seeks for Government's intervention especially in the field of education to empower the tribal women in actual sense.

Dr. Rabindra Kumar and Dr. Dipankar Majumder's joint venture "Empowerment of tribal Women Through Physical Education and Sports With Special Reference to Tripura" seeks to delineate how Sports, in Tripura, has become one of the means to empower women to expedite the multi-dimensional social process and economic strenght for developing confidence in their own capacities.

This journal owes debts which spread far and wide, it is collaborative in nature and hence demands a kind of effort

which is different from the one claimed by single author works. A number of people through their advice, support, discussion, criticism, patience, and even silence have helped us along the way. All those who have contributed to this volume have placed us in their debt. We are grateful to them for contributing to the common cause of the empowerment of tribal women.

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Keynote Address
Empowerment of Tribal Women

Khakchang Debbarma*

After the end of the Second World War and with the formation of the United Nations (UN) in 1945, various countries and international communities have focused on promoting human rights and development. Through the initiatives of the UN, many international human rights Covenants, treaties and organizations helped realized the need for not only promotion and protection of the dignity of human lives, but also the equal rights of men and women in all spheres. Although, a remarkable progress on promotion and protection of women human rights has been made by various international, national, regional human rights organizations around the world, the same is yet to be manifested among the tribal women in the rural areas of various countries including India. Hence, the issue of women security, empowerment and development and their economic and social status continued to be seen as a major concern of the world. Likewise, in India, the existing rigidity of social structure is considered to be one of the major challenges to empowerment of women (Beteille: 1999). Added to that, customary practices and lack of opportunities for education and economic avenues are also obstacles to women's empowerment.

In the recent past decades, focus has been made to bring about progress and development among women through empowerment and community involvement. Women empowerment has been considered vital for overall development of communities and societies particularly in the third world countries. Today, women are no longer seen as merely conventional housewives but it has been acknowledged that they do have tremendous potential for bringing a change through their involvement and participation. The concept of women's empowerment in the modern context can be traced to the early part of the 1980s when it was increasingly debated and promoted by women's organizations in the Third World countries and also UN declaration of decade for women development. Empowerment of women pre-supposes a theoretical framework that emphasizes the subordination of women in the society. Some consider empowerment of women as relevant issue due to magnitude of women's powerlessness and subordination in the contemporary social context.

Empowerment of women may be understood differently in different societies based on their level of socio-economic and political development. Generally, 'empowerment' is an enjoyment of certain rights by women, but usually signifies a little more than feeling better or more powerful. Women's empowerment is a transition from a position of enforced powerlessness to one of power that may promote their inherent strengths and positive self-image. Women's empowerment can be defined as a condition in which women are in the process of obtaining educational, legal, social, economic and political rights that are equivalent or nearly equal to those of male citizens. Women's empowerment also relates to their contributions to

the overall development process. Over the years there are changes in the concept of women empowerment, but studies since 1970s have emphasized the importance of the power to bring about changes in the situations of gender inequality and discrimination. Since then, the meaning of empowerment has expanded which has made it a process rather than an outcome. The stages or levels of women's empowerment may differ from one place or society to another. The objective of empowerment may be directed towards achievement of equity and parity in access to resources and decision making, which influence their lives rather than a single goal.

The United Nations Population Information Network identifies women empowerment with five different components, which are as follows:

1. Women's sense of self worth
2. Their right to have and to determine choices
3. Their right to have access to opportunities and resources
4. Their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home, and
5. Their ability to influence the direction of social change to create more just, social and economic orders, nationally and internationally.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) focuses on gender equality and women's empowerment not only as human rights, but also as a pathway to achieving the Development Goals and sustainable development. UNDP coordinates global and national efforts to integrate gender equality and women's empowerment into poverty reduction, democratic governance, crisis prevention and recovery, and environment

and sustainable development. Through global network, UNDP works to ensure that women have a real voice in all governance institutions, from the judiciary to the civil service, as well as in the private sector and civil society, so they can participate equally with men in public dialogue and decision-making and influence the decisions that will determine the future of their families and countries.

The world conferences of the 1990s on human rights, population and social development, all provided opportunities to mobilize and build a consensus among many actors around women's empowerment. This was crystallized in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action (BPA), which is considered as the most comprehensive expression of the world's commitment to women's rights. Thus, the 1990s seem to have brought about international attention to issues of sexual and reproductive rights, violence against women, and gender inequality. But the optimism of the 1990s was short lived as the first decade of the 21st century was posed by challenges to women's empowerment because of the "war on terror" and the increasing militarization and conflicts that followed the resurgence of religious fundamentalism in various parts of the world, and the continued focus on market based strategies and the redefinition of the state's role in development. Within the development establishment, although market fundamentalism has declined in the 1990s, the policies of poverty reduction, good governance, and social capital formulated by the World Bank and the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are still based on a paradigm of economic growth as machinery of social change (Molyneux and Razavi: 2006). Frustrated with pace of economic growth, Commission on the Sta-

tus of Women (CSW), in its 54th meeting in New York in March 2010 focused to review 15-year BPA and demanded a renewed commitment from their governments and the UN agencies to implement the BPA by moving from "paper commitment" to allocate resources, ensuring implementation and being accountable to women.

Conceptual Framework of Women's Empowerment

The term 'empowerment' pre-supposes the existence of a section of powerlessness in the society, which needs to be empowered. In this sense, empowerment consists of three related aspects - freedom, enabling and control. Freedom here refers to freedom from subjugation, deprivation and oppression perpetuated through institutionalized methods. Restrictions on women in participating in many activities perpetuated by norms of patriarchy in almost all societies need to be eliminated to enable women to be empowered. However, freedom alone cannot empower women rather they should be enabled to participate in social, economic, political and cultural spheres of life. For women to be empowered in real sense of the term, they need to be liberated from the clutch of social domain and be allowed to enjoy economic independence and political participation. Another aspect of empowerment is the power to 'control' over resources and ideology. Control over resources herein refers to that of Physical resources - land, water, forests; Human resources - people, their bodies, their labour and skills; Intellectual resources - knowledge, information, ideas; financial resources - money, access to money; and Self resources that include combination of intelligence, creativity, self esteem and confidence. In the same way, control of ideology means the ability to determine belief, values, attitudes and

virtually control over ways of thinking and perceiving situations. In this sense, the process of gaining control over the self, ideology and resources that determine power is understood as empowerment.

Empowerment is seen as the only effective answer to oppression, exploitation, injustice and the other maladies with which the Indian society is beset. By and large, the discussion of empowerment has been context-driven rather than theory-driven. The context is the contradiction between a hierarchical social structure and a democratic political system, which was present and perceived even at the time of independence. The contradiction which was hoped and believed to have ended with the transfer of power from British to Indian hands indeed became even more acute, extensive and clearly perceived (Beteille: 1999). Indian society exhibits substantial inequalities of income and wealth and more significantly, majority of population live below the poverty line in both rural and urban areas. Despite the changes in attitudes, women and persons of lower section of the society continued to suffer from many disadvantages (Beteille: 1999). Universal adult franchise came as a revolutionary turn in the country's history (Srinivas: 1992) but even after many elections, there are no significant improvements in the standard of living of the common people. Hence, the achievement of universal adult franchise has been far short of expectation. The new society envisaged in the Constitution was to replace the structure of hierarchy with the principles of equality and social justice. The equality provisions in the Constitution were not confined to political equality at election time alone, but sought to reach into basic social and economic matters. However, there has been a growing disappointment with

the low level of achievement of equality and social justice. It is realized that equalitarian social order cannot be achieved merely by having regular elections, good laws and plans and hence, emphasis has been on empowerment of people.

Empowering women is to enable women to make their choices, freedom to speak on their own behalf, freedom to determine and control their own lives and future. Empowerment is a process that enables women to gain access and control over material, intellectual and human resources. It is in this sense that empowerment is seen as redistribution of power that challenges patriarchal ideology and male dominance social systems. Empowerment is a process in which women become individually and collectively knowledgeable and goal oriented actors to take initiatives in overcoming gender inequalities, economic and social disparities. Women's empowerment refers to a strategy to achieve gender equality, economic and social parity as well as to enhance the capacity building processes. The concept of empowerment was redefined in 1990s to incorporate economic enterprise and integration of the economics in the global mainstream. It has been acknowledged that women's powerlessness arises from many factors like illiteracy, lack of awareness, information, skill, self-esteem, money, income opportunity and self-confidence. Therefore, women will be seen empowered only when they are equipped with the capabilities to have control over resources and develop psychological and physical capacity to challenge the prevailing gender norms and ensure change in the positive direction.

Empowerment implies a process by which one's power of self-organization is promoted, reinforced and directed to-

wards achieving the desired goals. The idea of women's empowerment aims at developing the capacity for self-reliance and 'holistic' transformation cutting across the relationship of subordination on account of gender, social and economic status and their role in the family and society. It encompasses their ability to make choices, control over resources and enjoy participatory relationship within the family and community. The empowerment may be invoked in the context of human rights, basic needs and amenities, human and economic security, capacity building, and skill formation or about the conditions of a dignified social existence. As many provisions of rights for all citizens enshrined in the Constitution of India seem to exist unenforced, empowerment is seen as a way of addressing the problem of rights.

Empowerment is also invoked in the context of economic weakness and insecurity, particularly of marginalized, unorganised and other disadvantaged groups, classes and women. India has exhibited a widespread political and economic deprivation of women. The focus on empowerment has given a new emphasis to the building of economic and social capabilities among women and communities. The provision of credit on easy and reasonable terms for farmers and tribal women has been viewed as steps towards their empowerment.

There is a large disparity in India in terms of economic, social and political opportunities available to men and women. For example, gender discrimination start early in life, with female infants having a lower chance of survival owing largely to parental neglect. The discrimination continues when they grow into adulthood. As women enter the labor force, they face discrimination in the labor market as well, primarily in the form

of lower wages. Further, Indian women remain politically powerless, as they are not adequately represented. Though women enjoy equal rights with men to vote and contest elections, their number in the Parliament and State Legislative Assemblies has always been very low and negligible. Thus, effective empowerment of women is essential to harness the women's talents in the main stream of economic development. Empowerment of women is a holistic and multi-dimensional in its approach and it includes social, political and economic aspects. Of all these facets of women's empowerment and development, economic aspect is considered as utmost significance in order to achieve lasting and sustainable development of the society.

Most current definitions of women's empowerment seem have drawn upon Amartya Sen's articulation of Development as Freedom (1999) where development is about expanding people's choices. According to Sen, freedom is the goal and means of development. Bennett (2002) defines empowerment as "the enhancement of assets and capabilities of diverse individuals and groups to engage, influence and hold accountable the institutions which affect them." Geeta Sen (1993) defines empowerment as "altering relations of power...which constrain women's options and autonomy and adversely affect health and well-being." Most definitions of empowerment agree that women themselves have a right to make choices and should be involved in determining which choices make the most sense for them and their families (Kabeer: 1999). Kabeer (2001) defines it as "the expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them." Empowerment is thus, understood as outcome, such as improvement in education, health, and economic and

political participation. The most common indicators are capabilities, education and health in particular, and control over economic and political resources and decision-making.

Charmes and Wieringa (2003) have defined a Women's Empowerment Matrix that consists of six dimensions -- physical, socio-cultural, religious, economic, political, legal - and six levels: individual, household, community, state, region, and global. Grown (2008) defines three domains of empowerment (adopted by the Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality): the capabilities domain, which evaluates knowledge and health factors through indicators of education, health, and nutrition; the access to resources and opportunities domain, which primarily refers to access to political decision making and economic assets; and the security domain, which considers violence and conflict matters.

Normally, there are three aspects of indicators of empowerment: 1. Control over economic resources measured by men and women's earned income; 2. Economic participation and decision-making, measured by women and men's share of administrative, professional, managerial, and technical positions; and 3. Political participation and decision-making, measured by male and female share of parliamentary seats.

II
Aspects of Women's Empowerment

1. Quota Systems and Political Empowerment

Political empowerment is measured by percentage of seats held by women in law making bodies. The percentage of women's representation in Parliament is reportedly improved

over the past two decades, from 11.3% in 1990 to about 18% globally. While the trend is toward increased women's representation in national parliaments, no region has yet reached the goal of 25% women in parliament as set out in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (UNIFEM: 2010). It is seen that women tend to fare better in proportional representation systems than in majority representation systems.

Quota system for women's participation has played an important role in increasing women's representation. In addition to quotas in parliament, democratization of political parties, building women's caucuses, and training and capacity building are important to ensure efforts towards gender-just policies. Women's presence does increase attention to women's issues. In the civil service, women have made progress in gaining middle level management positions, but not at the top level. Women's presence in this sector is seen highly correlated with formulating and implementing gender-just policies (UNIFEM: 2010). Yet, most countries have not focused on increasing women's participation in this area. Judiciary and law enforcement remain male domains though women have made some inroads in appointments as judges, including in the Supreme Court.

It does appear unfair in a democracy when the organs of public authority are all in the hands of men from a particular social background. A cabinet, a Supreme Court and a higher civil service which has women as well as men from all sections of the communities is likely to be more open and sensitive in its approach to the larger problems of society than one whose members are all of the same background. Most persons think that in India it is not possible to give equal representation

in public institutions to the various classes. But, what cannot be done for class, can in fact be done for caste and women through quota or reservation system. No doubt, quotas will have social costs. After all, the constitution of India had adopted provisions for equal opportunities for all, and creating additional provisions for special opportunities for some is bound to put strains on the other. Ambedkar himself, while advocating special provisions for the specially disadvantaged, had argued that those provisions should not be made so extensive as to eat up the general provision of equality of opportunity for all.

Because of increasing inequalities, more quota system is seemingly adopted in India. For example, a proposal in the 1950s to have quotas in employment for the OBC in addition to those for the SCs and STs was aborted; but the same came to be adopted in the 1990s. The committee on the status of women had in the 1970s recommended against the adoption of quotas for women in parliament and in the state assemblies; but now there is a bill on the Women's Reservation. India is among the countries that have passed legislation on 33% reservation for women to increase their participation in local self-government, panchayat institution, as provided under the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution of India. The use of quotas for women in national and local government has been effective in promoting women's political participation and decision-making. Quotas are found more effective when they are accompanied by sanctions, changes in law, and support of political parties. In addition to electoral quotas, some countries have used quotas for civil service recruitment and appointments to administrativ and advisory appointments (CSW 2009). It is also reported tha

in places where there is local mobilization of women, they have been successful in making gains for issues such as water, education for girls, and health care. However, quotas can at best touch only the upper fringes of the redistribution of power in large complex society of India and women are still seen underrepresented in upper levels of decision-making positions. The vast gap between theory and reality with regard to women's actual role in democratic functioning in modern India makes it clear that women's empowerment is a precondition for the success of democracy.

2. Economic Empowerment

In the global economy, women's economic participation is marked by three trends: increasing women for labor force, increased participation in the informal economy, and migrating to work in the service industry in the developed world. In regard to women's economic participation, it is seen that women are over represented in the informal or vulnerable economy (52.7% compared to 49.1% for men, ILO: 2002).

Access to employment remains a challenge for most women who still continue to be in low paid, insecure jobs and informal economies, and bears a disproportionate burden of unpaid care work. Women also face harassment in the workplace and dismissal for being pregnant. Women also have limited access to credit to engage in business entrepreneurial activity. Hence, a new gender policy approach is needed that will focus on changing norms of unpaid care work through parental leave policy; quantify and reduce care work; develop educational systems that erase gender stereotypes; and raise the quality of work in all sectors (ILO 2010).

In addition, corporate culture and social cultural expec-

tation of women's roles continue to create constraints on women's access to employment, concentration in low paid jobs, gender segregated labor markets, pay gaps, and discrimination and harassment in the formal and informal workplaces. Women's lack of access to land and the insecurity of their property rights pose significant constraints on women's access to agricultural services, including credit, that require formalized ownership of land (UNIFEM: 2010). Women in many countries including India and North East Indian societies have had difficulties in gaining inheritance rights.

India's National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA 2005, later renamed as MGNREGA) has been seen successful in increasing women's livelihoods. The Act guarantees 100 days of employment on rural public works projects to a member of every rural household, and one-third of the workers are intended to be women. MGNREGA reflects the government's commitment to supporting women's employment, notably through locally available projects and child care facilities. Women's share of employment in the scheme has been over 40 percent, rising to 82 percent in the state of Tamil Nadu. In Andhra Pradesh, poor low-caste women in groups of 5 to 15 have purchased or leased land through government schemes for subsidized credit and grants and are now farming these lots productively (Agarwal 2010). In the Nity Aayog Meeting held on February 8, 2015, in New Delhi, the Government of India led by Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, there was a general consensus to empower states economically with the objective to bring about development at the state level.

Economic Empowerment and SHGs

Although the percentage of women in vulnerable employment has dropped since 1997 in most regions, disparity between men and women exists, especially in the Middle East, North Africa, and Sub-Saharan Africa (UNIFEM 2010:54). Part of this increase is a result of the popularity of the micro-finance credit programs that support women in the informal economies. In 2007 microfinance organizations reached 154.8 million clients of whom 106.6 million were women (CSW: 2009). While they do provide women with access to credit and income through entrepreneurship, they do not reach the poorest women or meet the needs of women who want to expand their businesses.

Over the past several decades, women's movements have learned the value of organizing strategies at multiple levels. At the local level, women-run, community-based organizations are the most effective means of supporting the poor and most vulnerable, and also most effective at including women in leadership and decision making at the local level. They have also learned the power of networks at the local, national, and transnational levels for both advocacy and learning from each other. Hence, the best practices in the women's movements include both local and transnational networks.

Building capacity in communities and forming partnerships with local leaders and institutions has been another effective means to empower women and engage them in transforming their lives. Mahila Samakhya (Women's Collective), Swayam Sikhshan Prayog (Self Learning Experiment) in India, Women of Color United in the US, an umbrella group of 70 organizations, are examples of groups that work to empower women to advocate for policy changes at the local level. The collective approach and focus on transforming local power

relations differentiate these groups from self-help groups that are promoted to enable individual women to gain access to micro-credit for micro-enterprises.

In the midst of tradition of women's social restrictions, and when the state failed to safeguard the interest of the poor and marginalized people, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Self Help Groups (SHGs), and other voluntary organizations have emerged as important link between the poor and the formal system. These organizations appeared as help for many rural women who have not been outside the domain of the homes. A SHG is a registered or unregistered group of micro entrepreneurs having homogenous social and economic background, voluntarily coming together to save regularly a small sum of money, mutually agreeing to contribute to a common fund and to meet their emergency needs on the basis of mutual help. Also, it is a group of people who pool in their resources to become financially stable by taking loans from the money collected by that group and by making all the members in the group self employed. The group members use collective wisdom to ensure proper goal oriented use of credit and timely repayment. This system eliminates the need for collateral and is closely related to that of solidarity lending widely used by micro finance institutions (MFIs).

The SHGs in India was initiated by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) in February 1992. Normally after six month of existence of SHGs and after collecting sufficient thrift fund, the groups approach the link banks either commercial or co-operative with credit plan. SHGs are seen as instruments for a variety of goals including empowering women, developing leadership abilities among

poor people, increasing school enrolment and improving nutrition among rural women.

North East India is the home to more than 250 different indigenous ethnic communities with diverse cultural and socio-economic realities. Women in this region have taken on themselves the mantle to feed their children and make their household hearth burning. This has certain historical and traditional reasons. Men in these societies were engaged in hunting or inter tribal warfare and in times of peace engaged themselves in cultivation and agriculture. Therefore, women are more or less accustomed to be productive so that their hearth burns. Yet, they are completely absent in the decision making in the traditional political bodies of the villages. And with the increasing elements of patriarchal structures in the society, women do not have greater control over household decision-making, reproductive control and physical security. Though they have been producers and sellers from ancient times they are not big entrepreneurs but are self-sufficient.

Excepting the Khasi, Jaintia and Garo, people in Northeast India follow patriarchal system, which is more of male dominant society. The patriarchal system is so deeply ingrained in their social system that they do not have much say in decision-making process either in the family or society. In these societies, both ancestral and parental properties are mostly shared by male members of the family and women once married has to live in her husband's house whether abusive alcoholic or a good husband. Divorce is not so common in Northeast India. Widow re-marriage is encouraged. Tribal women are by nature hardworking and involved themselves in many activities within their homes. The works are generally confined

to domestic chores like cooking, fetching water from well, taking care of children and aged, rearing of cattle, piggery, working in the paddy field, collecting firewood, forest products, etc.

In Northeast states including Tripura, tribal women are seen as more or less contented with what they have and the culture of sharing and living in a community to some extent have helped them in times of need. The day-to-day needs are provided from the paddy field as they practice multi cropping. Pigs are reared for festival and family poultry serves them with eggs and chicken. The twig serves as the materials for the cooking purpose as only few houses can afford gas for cooking purpose.

The emergence and activities of SHGs in the villages have brought about several thousands of uneducated women in the North East, out of the confines of their homes and enabled them to gain considerable access to economic independence and connected them with financial institutions thereby helping them to improve their margins and incomes. It has given them an identity on collective voice as women. The SHGs formed by women encourage themselves to generate income is found to be a small but significant step towards women economic empowerment. The activities of the SHGs help meet emergent credit needs of the women and their families. Most of the groups take to rearing of pigs, agriculture, weaving of traditional cloths, fishery, poultry, making of incense stick with locally available products, etc., and easily perishable products like rice cake, fresh vegetables, coconut ladoos, etc.

Most of these women are not educated but they have learned to maintain membership register, cashbook, saving and

loan ledger. They have also learned to prepare action plans after a detail discussion of their proposed activities. Every member of the group gets an opportunity to share their views and opinions. The opportunity of open discussion in such meetings gives women the confidence to speak in public forum. Thus, the SHGs have achieved a partial success in bringing rural women to the local level of decision-making.

The tribal women in North East India including Tripura have shown a change in the personality development of women after joining the SHGs. The opportunity of speaking and sharing of ideas in the gathering is slowly giving them the self-confidence, which is very essential for their overall growth. Like the rest of India, women in the North East societies are not included in the formal decision making processes. Phrases in the tribal society such as 'women's talk, which means useless talks, 'men wearing the wraparound' which means the women is the controlling men within the family are used to explain the lower position of women. Folk tales and folk songs also revolve around stories about the supremacy of men and the role of women in the society as lower to that of men. With such kind of socialization process taking place in the society it becomes a difficult task to bring women out of the confines of their homes. But, SHGs to some extent have been able to give them the confidence to develop their personalities.

The quality of the life of some of the members of the SHGs has improved to some extent due to income and habit of savings from their micro-economy activities. Through the small earnings that are made through the SHGs women contribute in times of needs like marriage, sickness, death, religious festivals and payment of children's fees, etc. The experi-

ence of earning and spending for important occasion gives them their self worth.

Another important impact is the banking activity done by women, which was not a visible practice prior to the starting of SHGs. Any work related to the outside public domain, was done by the men folk. But with the formation of the SHGs in the rural areas, women who had not been to the formal banking system, started to operate bank account, as the banks do not give loans unless they have their group account in the bank.

The growth of SHGs in the villages has sensitized men to a large extent. The increase in the household income with the contribution of women involving in the small business through SHGs, due to higher production, has elevated a woman with higher status then what she used to enjoy before. The participation of different women groups in different capacities in the local fair organized by government and NGOs from time to time encourages the successful SHGs to showcase their product. It also gives positive encouragement to the non-functioning groups and others who have not been part of any such organization.

Emancipation of women, particularly in the tribal society, will not bear instant result because of societal values, which is a stronghold of traditions. When some of these social values, which restrict women in many aspects, undergo a change then only the economic and political empowerment of tribal women will be meaningful. The extreme poverty that they are undergoing also hampers the successful growth of SHGs. Some of the women do not even have the minimum contributory amount, which may be Rs. 50 to Rs.100. When any of the members fail to pay regularly it affects the whole group to grow.

Lack of proper promotion, training and mentoring of affinity groups leads to the weakness of SHGs. Politicians are also keen to translate the success of SHGs movements into political capital. Trainings are imparted only to the leaders, which creates gap between the leaders and other members of the SHGs.

The government needs to take more affirmative action in order to eliminate disparity, which causes gender discrimination. In order to make known about policies and program of the government to the poor villagers, a regular awareness orientation and programmes are essential, which should be in local language for better understanding. Skill enhancement training based on products locally available needs to be given to improve the earning of the members. The proper use of the raw materials available locally for profit making is important. To impart skills in simple calculation, literacy and transaction of record maintenance, is an important tool in the successful working of SHGs. From inception of the group all members should be trained to have skills in conducting meetings, writing of minutes, taking of attendance, group collection, record maintenance, group activities, preparation of annual plan, budget, etc.

No doubt, the formation of SHGs seems to have brought about changes in the outlook of some sections of the tribal women of the North East India including the state of Tripura. One such example is in the area of credit and saving and self-confidence. However, such changes are seen only among the few leaders and not common members of the SHGs because of the prevailing problem of illiteracy, and because of this problem majority of tribal women are hesitant to join SHGs. Most

members are highly dependent on leaders who are relatively little exposed and have ability to write their names. The major hurdle to empowerment of tribal women in Tripura is the lack of education.

3. Educations and Women's Empowerment

Needless to say that education had been regarded as a key to women's empowerment for its ability to raise awareness and open possibilities as well as its instrumental link to economic growth and children's health. Hence, universal primary education has been a goal in many developing countries including India's Constitutional provisions as mentioned in Directive principles of State Policies that states free and compulsory education up to the age of 14 years of age. There is a direct correlation between women's health and education and economic empowerment. Access to education, household wealth, and place of residence are important factors in women's health outcomes in developing and developed countries (WHO: 2009:2). In most cases, lack of health education and access to affordable health care continue to prevent women from enjoying good health.

The most successful social policies that have improved education and health outcomes are various conditional cash and asset transfer policies (Barrientos: 2010). These programs involved funding from the state to institutions for education and health care, funds supported textbooks and uniforms to financial aid and in-kind assistance, take-home food, and in-school canteens. Building schools in rural areas, separate latrines for girls, and providing childcare facilities for teen mothers, and teacher training are all important aspects for increasing girls' enrolment and continued school attendance

(UNESCO: 2008).

It is obvious that women in urban areas have better access to facilities for education, jobs and other exposure for personality development. In Tripura, tribal women are confined mostly in rural areas where there are absence of good and quality education and economic opportunities. This perhaps is one factor that has created a wide gap between urban and rural tribal women in the state. There is no denying the fact that in rural areas of Tripura, good schools for quality and competitive education is not given importance as compared to the educational institutions in the urban areas and capital city of the state, Agartala. The low level of income or economy of the tribal families living in the rural areas does not allow them, leave alone tribal women, to go out to the capital city or urban areas for education because of high expenses involvd. The boarding facilities for tribal women in the capital and other urban areas of the state do not have adequate number of seats to accommodate many aspiring rural students. It is in this sense that initiatives and efforts of the state government to provide budget policies relating to educational infrastructure for quality and better educational facilities by establishing in rural areas of the state day cum residential institutions with facilities of all around development, sports, communication, etc., are imperative to make empowerment of tribal women more meaningful. In addition to existing rural institutions, establishment of schools of all India and international recognized standard syllabus such as CBCE, ICSE, and in English medium of instruction, recruitment of qualified teachers, etc., will definitely go a long way in providing options and compatible education to the tribal women in the state. Education, which enables tribal

women to build up their self-confidence to compete for jobs outside the state at the national and international levels, is important for not only in terms of women empowerment but also overall development.

Quality education with modern facilities of all around development and credit or loan subsidy for members of SHGs should be provided free from favour and without political consideration and attachment. Recruitment of teachers should also be made purely based on merits without any political acumen or favouratism. Policies and programmes of microfinance through government subsidy should be in continuous innovative process as they are vital for empowerment and ever changing development. Policies of inclusive theory of empowerment and development approach may be adopted in continuous process. Thus, empowerment of tribal women occupies a centre-stage of development. On the other hand, women's participation in various economy development activities plays an important role for empowerment and development for which awareness and training programmes by government agencies and NGOs are vital. All the aspects of empowerment of women are complementary to each other of which education is the gateway. Considering the importance of this aspect, many local self-government, panchayat institutions, in other parts of India, educational qualification is made mandatory.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it may be stated that in the last two decades the role of the state has been redefined in the global economy. With the current crisis in the globalized society, it is imperative to redefine the role of the state, which will not only to manage the crisis but also to transform systems. Like

the stimulus plan for the economy, the state needs to develop a motiyating plan for women's empowerment, central to which would be normative, procedural and funding changes to implement the commitments to women's empowerment, equality and gender-justice. Clearly articulating commitment to gender equality in national plans backed by allocation of resources, incorporating gender responsive budgetary processes at all levels, and formulating policies based on people's needs is an important step in the right direction.

The 1990s and following decades were significant in terms of international consensus on women's rights and equality. Women's empowerment has been faced with challenges -- financial, care, food, HIV/AIDs, and environmental. These multiple crises have galvanized a consensus on the responsibilities of the state in addressing them to promote women's empowerment and well being of the poor people around the globe. This was evident at the 54th CSW meetings in New York in March 2010. To fulfill their promises to women's empowerment and gender-justice, the world's governments will need to undertake a stimulus plan for women's empowerment that will: (1) focus on gender justice in law, policies, and budget allocations at all levels and in all sectors, including macroeconomic policies; (2) finance and implement these commitments; and (3) ensure changes in government structures and machineries at all levels to institutionalize the process of gender-justice. Political will at all levels of the leadership is important to this success. To mobilize and sustain this political will, women's movements and other human rights movements and NGOs will have to be active and persistent to demand accountability at local, national, and international levels.

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The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are eight international development goals established at the Millennium Summit in 2000. 192 United Nations member states and many international organizations agreed to achieve these goals by the year 2015. The eight goals are: 1.Eradicate extreme poverty, 2.Reduce child mortality rates, 3.Universal primary education, 4.Gender equality and empowerment of women, 5.Improve maternal health, 6.Fighting disease epidemics such as AIDS, 7.Ensure environment sustainability, and 8.Develop a global partnership for development.

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Status of Tribal Women in Tripura -An Exploration From the Perspective of Economic Activities

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Abstract

The tribal population of Tripura, as per 2011 census, is 11,66,813, constituting around 31 percent of the total population of 36,73,917. In the total population of the state, 48.98 percent are women. However, the scheduled tribe women constitute 49.57 percent of the total tribal population of the state, representing almost half of the tribal population. The sex ratio of the tribal population in the state is 983, which in rural areas is 982 and in urban areas this ratio has gone up to 1012 as per 2011 census. According to last census report, the literacy rate of the tribal women has gone up to 71.6, which in the recent years have quite naturally gone up in consort with the overall literacy rate of 96.84 in Tripura. Tribal women have a dissimilar social identity in the state compared to the non-tribal women. The presence of matrilineal and matriarchal system of society, along with prevalence of bride-price in place of dowry, has elevated the tribal women's status. In addition to this, the importance of the tribal women in the society is substantial, due to their relentless hardworking capacity, family management capacity, efficiency in all agrarian operations with the exception of ploughing and so on. The tribal women also act as

main workers and marginal workers in different economic activities including cultivation, mining, forestry, fishing, hunting, plantation, household industry, trade and commerce and other services. In this context, this paper will explore the status of tribal women from the point of economic activity based on secondary data. The question is 'whether the tribal women in the state today are better placed from the perspective of economic activity undertaken by them compared to earlier years'.

Key words: scheduled tribes, tribal women, economi... ity.

Introduction:

The active participation of women in any activity, social or economic, is indispensable for the optimal socio-economic development of any community, locality, state, region or country. United Nations has defined the status of women as the "conjunction of position a women occupies as a worker, student, wife, mother.....of the power and prestige attached to these positions, and of the right and duties she is expected to exercise" (United Nations, 1975). Women, occupying half the sky, need to be empowered for overall development of the present and to build up a strong foundation for the future. Empowerment means higher literacy rates, better education, better healthcare, equal ownership of productive resources, consciousness of rights and duties, improved standards of living,independence, self-esteem,self-reliance and self-confidence. This is possible, to a large extent, by the increased participation of women in various economic activities.

In the small sylvian land of Tripura in the north-eastern wing of India, different ethnic groups have been residing, that

includes nineteen notified Scheduled Tribes, namely Tripuri, Reang, Chakma, Jamatia, Halam, Noatia, Mog, Garo,Munda, Kuki, Lushai, Lepcha, Chaimal, Khasia, Urang, Santal, Uchai, Bhil and Bhutia. The tribal population, as per 2011 census, is 11,66,813, constituting around 31 percent of the total population of 36,73,917. In the total population of the state, 48.98 percent are women. However, the scheduled tribe women constitute 49.57 percent of the total tribal population of the state, representing almost half of the tribal population. The sex ratio of the tribal population in the state is 983, which in rural areas is 982 and in urban areas this ratio has gone up to 1012 as per 2011 census. 'It appears that the tribal society of Tripura has not yet developed a strong preference for the male child despite being introduced to new ideas and norms with development' (Ghosh B. et al, 2011). According to last census report, the literacy rate of the tribal women has gone up to 71.6, which in the recent years has quite naturally gone up in consort with the overall literacy rate of 96.84 in Tripura.

Tribal women have a dissimilar social identity in the state compared to the non-tribal women. The presence of matrilineal and matriarchal system of society, along with prevalence of bride-price in place of dowry, have elevated tribal women's status. In addition to this, the importance of the tribal women in the society is substantial, due to their relentless hardworking capacity, family management capacity, efficiency in all agrarian operations (with the exception of ploughing and so on.) The tribal women also act as main workers and marginal workers in different economic activities including cultivation, mining, forestry, fishing, hunting, plantation, household industry, trade and commerce and other services.

In recent years, the empowerment of women has been recognized as a central issue in determining their status.Tribal women, while being a disadvantaged and vulnerable group are, nevertheless, better placed, in many respects, than their counterparts in the general population and are, in certain areas, more empowered. They do not suffer segregation or lower status. This is reflected in their higher sex-ratio (983)in comparison with the general population (961)of Tripura as per 2001 census. The child sex-ratio for tribals also compares favorably vis-à-vis the general population, at 953. However, the negative practices of the mainstream population seem to have started percolating to the tribal population as well. The child female to male sex ratio shows a decline, while in areas such as education and health tribal women lag behind significantly.

Objective:

This paper explores the status of tribal women in the backdrop of economic activity.The question is 'whether the tribal women in the state today are better placed from the perspective of economic activity undertaken by them compared to earlier years'.

Methodology:

This paper is based on secondary data collected from Census of India.Simple mathematical tools like percentages and growth rate are used in the paper.

Concepts of Economic Activities:

Work is defined as participation in any economically productive activity with or without compensation, wages or profit. Such participation may be physical and/or mental in nature. Work involves not only actual work but also includes effective supervision and direction of work. It even includes part time

help or unpaid work on farm, family enterprise or in any other economic activity.All persons engaged in 'work' as defined above are workers(http://censusindia.gov.in/Metadata). After many modifications in the concept of economic activity, in 1961 census it was decided that the economic data should be collected on the basis of work i.e. the population should be divided into two classes, 'Workers' and 'Non-workers'; and further during 1971 census, the classifications among the workers were adopted as cultivators, Agricultural Labourers, working at Household Industry and other Workers. Workers were also categorized as main workers and marginal workers. Before exploring the status of tribal women based on their involvement in economic activity, these important concepts related to the working class as defined by census of India, need to be highlighted.

a) Main Workers

All those workers who were engaged in any economically productive activity for 183 days (six months) and more during the last year are termed as main workers.

b) Marginal Workers

All those workers who had worked any time in the year preceding enumeration but did not work for a major part the year i.e. those who worked less than 183 days or less than six months were termed as marginal workers.

Census provides information on four categories of workers only.The first two are related to agricultural activities while the other two are treated as non-agricultural workforce in this report.

a) Cultivators

Include persons engaged in cultivation of land owned or

held from government or private persons or institutions for payment in money, kind or share.

b) Agricultural Labourers

A person who works on another person's land for wages in money or kind or share is regarded as agricultural labourers

c) Household Industry Workers

An industry conducted by one or more numbers of the household at home or within the village in rural areas. The industry should not be run on the scale of a registered factory, which would qualify to be registered under the Indian Factory Act.

d) Other Workers

All those who had worked in any field of economic activity other than cultivation, agricultural labourers or workers in the household industry are classified as other workers.

Two more concepts, used in the paper, need to be stated here.

a) Decadal Growth Rate:

It is the growth of population in a particular country, state or region in a gap of every 10 years.

b) Work Participation Rate:

The Work participation rate is defined as the percentage of total workers (main and marginal) to total population.

$$\text{Work Partisipation Rate} = \frac{\text{Total Work}}{\text{Total Pouplation}}$$

Tribal Women in Tripura:

The tribals of Tripura have provided a place of considerable socio-economic importance to their womenfolk. Women constitute the economic backbone in all the tribal communities. Several studies on tribal women of north-east India reveal

that like all hill women, they are physically and socially fit to lead a life of extreme hardship (Ghosh B.et al, 2011). In the traditional jhum economy ofTripura, tribal women usually participate in almost all economic activities though there was some sort of a division of labour on the basis of sex and age (Chakraborty, 1993).In the jhumia society, women might not be equal to their male counterparts in every respect,but they are economically less dependent on them (Ganguly J.B., 1993). 'Tripura witnessed several socio-cultural,demographic, economic and political changes during the late 19th and 20th centuries.For quite a long time, this sparsely populated tribal princely state continued with a traditional mode of production characterized by shifting cultivation. The subsistence economy of the tribals could neither generate enough trade and commerce nor pull in sufficient revenues to meet the growing demands of the rulers.This necessitated widespread immigration of Bengali peasants from neighbouring East Bengal, in order to introduce settled cultivation in the state to raise the volume of revenues for the rulers. The illiterate natives were also not it for administrative jobs and Hindu Bengali immigrants again filled in this gap' (Ghosh B. et al, 2011).From 1872 to 1951, the proportion of tribals in the state came down drastically from 63.78 percent in 1872 to 34.35 percent in 1951. In 2011, it further declined to around 31.1 percent.

The Scheduled tribe population in the state, as per 2011 census, is 11,66,813, constituting around 31 percent of the total population of 36,73,917. The scheduled tribe women constitute 49.57 percent of the total tribal population of the state, representing almost half of the tribal population. Total tribal female population in the state in 2011 is 5,63,908.

Table 1: Tribal Women Statistics:

Tribal women statistics	2011 Census
Total tribal women	563908
Population in age group 0 - 6	85763
Population with age more than 6 years	492723
Population in age group 15 - 64 years	362023
Percentage of women in age group15 -64 (working age)	*73.47*

Source: Compiled from Census data

The female tribal with age more than 6 years is 492723, which is almost 87 percent of the total female tribal population. Most encouraging is that, 73.47 percent of the total female tribal population is in the age group 15 - 64 years, which is considered as the working age. Proper utilization of this work force definitely can play a significant role in various economic activities, which can improve the state income situation through multiplier effect.

Decadal growth rate of Tribal Women Workers in Tripura (2001-2011):

There has been a decadal growth of 15.29 percent in tribal female population in 2011 compared to 2001. The decadal growth rate of tribal female workers is depicted in table 2.

Table 2: Tribal female workers (2001 & 2011)

Category	2001	2011	Decadal GrowthRate
Tribal Female Population	489106	563908	15.29
Total Female Workers	183612	208663	13.64
Female Main Workers	87272	82965	- 4.94
Female Marginal Workers	96340	125698	30.47
Female Non-Workers	305494	369823	21.06

Source: Compiled from Census data

However, the decadal growth rate of female tribal workers in 2011 is 13.64 percent, which is lower than that of total tribal female population (15.29 percent).

Again, most interestingly, the decadal growth rate of tribal female main workers declined alarmingly by 4.94 percent, which indicates work opportunity for more than 6 months has decreased. On the contrary, the growth rate of female tribal marginal workers has increased significantly by 30.47 percent in the last ten years. In other words, the scope of work for them for more than six months has decreased. The growth rate of non-workers in this section has also escalated during the last decade.

Thus, decadal growth rate of tribal women marginal workers and non-workers are much more than growth rate of tribal women population as well as women worker. Growth rate of tribal women main worker is declining. Here lies the paradox. In this situation, the question that emerges is, are tribal women shifting to any other activity or are they not getting any work? How will they improve their economic condition? Or, can one claim them to be economically empowered? This calls for a more in-depth study, which could not be done in this paper due to constraints.

Work Participation Rate of TribalWomen:

Work participation rate is an important indicator of workforce involvement in any activity, be it main or marginal. The female work participation rate (FWPR) is measured by calculating the proportion of female main plus marginal workers among the female population.'Female work participation rates are high in states with hilly regions and those inhabited by tribals, such as most of the Northeast, ... These are also the

states where there are low gender disparities in terms of work participation. Higher FWPR can be partially explained by the fact that community-based organization of subsistence production requires a high level of women's labour participation' (Rustagi P., 2004).

Table 3: Gender Gap based on work participation rate

Year	Tribal Male	Tribal Female	Tribal Total	Gender Gap
1961	54.76	48.26	51.51	6.50
1971	52.54	9.55	31.04	42.99
1981	52.62	19.02	35.82	33.60
1991	45.90	25.30	35.08	20.60
2001	47.60	37.50	42.70	10.10
2011	51.32	37.00	43.76	14.32

Source: Compiled from Census data

The work participation rate of tribal men is higher as compared to tribal women in all the census years, though the tribal women participated 'almost neck and neck with their male counterparts till 1961, have faced the onus of development' (Ghosh B.,2011). In the following years, there is marginal increase in tribal female WPR while the male WPR remain more or less in the same position. The huge gender gap of 42.99 percent in 1971 gradually reduced in the following decades and reached around 10 percent in 2001. However, the gap increased to 14.32 percent in 2011.

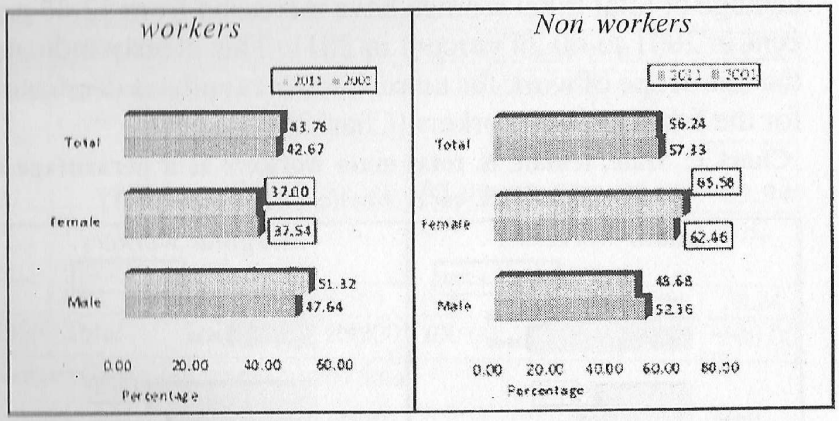
Are the tribal women in better positioned in terms of economic activity?

It has been discussed in the earlier sections that the tribal

women are engaged in various economic activities as main as well as marginal workers. In order to look into the position of tribal women workers in this state, four different perspectives have been considered depending on 2001 & 2011 Census data.

- Tribal women workers as percentage of total tribal population,
- Tribal women non-workers as percentage of total tribal population,
- Tribal women main workers as percentage of total tribal women workers, and
- Tribal women marginal workers as percentage of total tribal women workers.

Chart 1: Male, female & total workers as a percentage of total male, female & total population (2001 & 2011)



Source: Compiled from Census data

In 2001, out of the total tribal population of 9,93,456, around 42 percent are workers and in 2011 it is around 44 percent. Again, 18.48 percent of tribal women in total tribal population act as workers in 2001, that fell to 17.88 in 2011. This percentage for male tribals has increased a bit from 24.18 percent to 25.88 percent during the said period.

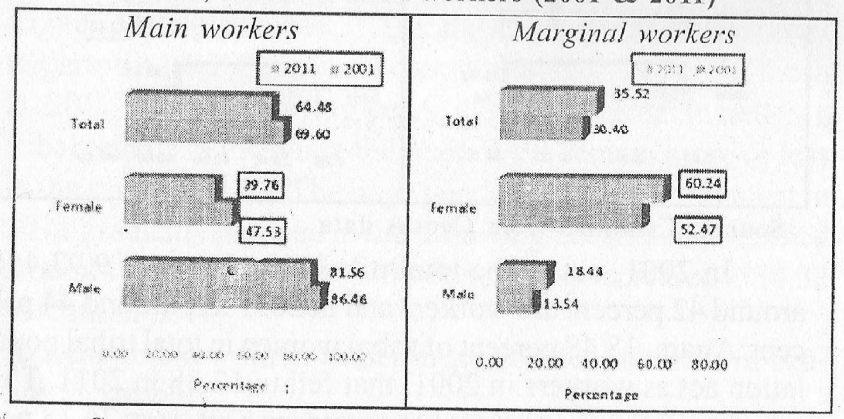
The percentage of tribal women workers in the total tribal women is 37.54 percent in 2001, which slightly declined to 37 percent in 2011. There is, however, a considerable increase in percentage of male workers in total tribal male population.

In a nutshell, it can be concluded that there is decrease in female tribal women's participation as workers.

It is a matter of concern that percentage of tribal women non-workers has increased significantly, though there is a decline in case of both male tribals and tribal population as a whole.

From the perspective of the tribal women acting as main and marginal workers, it is observed that the tribal women main workers as percentage of total tribal women workers have decreased from 47.53 percent in 2001 to 39.76 percent in 2011. On the contrary, the tribal women marginal workers as percentage of total tribal women have increased from 52.47 percent in 2001 to 60.24 percent in 2011. This clearly indicates that the scope of work for more than six months is decreasing for the female tribal workers (Chart 2).

Chart 2: Male, female & total main workers as a percentage of male, female & total workers (2001 & 2011)



Source: Compiled from Census data

It is also worth mentioning that percentage of main workers has decreased in cases of male tribals, female tribals as well tribal working population as a whole, though there is increase in absolute terms. The scenario is opposite in case of marginal workers.

According to Census of India, the major economic activities are classified into cultivators, agricultural labourers, household industries and other services. The concepts are defined in earlier section. The involvement in these economic activities is considered in table 4.

Table 4: Major economic activities (Main) of Tribal Women in Tripura (in percent) (1961-2011)

Sl. No.	Activities	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
1.	Cultivator	83.07	64.59	55.83	54.24	45.95	35.74
2.	Agricultural Labourer	2.79	28.32	37.08	36.59	34.43	34.20
1+2	Agricultural Sector	**85.86**	**92.91**	**92.91**	**90.83**	**80.38**	**69.94**
3.	Household industry	10.96	3.73	0.51	0.59	1.73	1.82
4.	Other Services	3.18	3.36	6.58	8.58	17.89	28.24
1+2+3+4	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Compiled from Census data

The dependence of tribal women population, working as main worker, on agricultural sector has decreased over the census years. Percentage of tribal main worker working in agricultural sector has decreased from 92.91 percent in 1971 to 69.94 percent in 2011. Tribal women's involvement in other services, that is tertiary sector, has increased from 3.36 per-

cent in 1971 to 28.24 percent in 2011. Clearly, there is sign of development. The credit must go to the educational upliftment as well as change in attitudes of the tribal people. Further, opening of employment opportunities, though less, might have bettered the situation.

But, matter of concern is that the condition of tribal women marginal workers is distressing. The percentage of tribal women marginal workers engaged in cultivation has decreased considerably, and there is increase in involvement as agricultural labourers. This percentage in case of household industry has remained more or less unchanged.

Table 5: Tribal Women marginal workers (2001 & 2011)

Activities	2001	2011
Cultivator	31272 (32.46)	23928 (19.04)
Agricultural Labourers	49820 (51.71)	67287 (53.53)
Household industry	4873 (5.06)	6489 (5.16)
Other Services	10374 (10.77)	27994 (22.27)
Total	96340 (100.00)	125698 (100.00)

Census of India has classified marginal workers into two categories from census 2011 - marginal workers who has worked for 0 - 3 months and marginal workers who got job for 3 - 6 months.

Table 6: Tribal Women Marginal Workers classified (census 2011)

Activities	3 - 6 months	0 - 3 months	Total
Cultivators	20077 (83.91)	3851 (16.09)	23928
Agricultural Labourers	55953 (83.15)	11334 (16.85)	67287
Household Industry	4833 (74.48)	1656 (25.52)	6489
Other Services	17964 (64.17)	10030 (35.83)	27994
Total	**98827 (78.62)**	**26871 (21.38)**	**125698**

Source: Compiled from Census data
Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentage to total.

21.38 percent of the tribal women marginal workers are getting work for less than 3 months. 35.83 percent of them worked in other services! What about rest of the year or for other three months? It is high time to think about that section who are marginal workers getting work for less than three months.

Summary & Concluding Remarks:

The status of tribal women has risen to a certain extent, as there has been an increase in number of tribal women engaged in economic activity.Decadal growth rate of tribal women marginal workers and non-workers is much more than growth rate of tribal women population as well as women worker. Growth rate of tribal women main worker is declining. But as percentage to total, there has been a mixed outcome so far as census data is concerned. The percentage of tribal women workers to total tribal population has increased, whereas percentage of non-workers has increased. Percentage of tribal women main workers to total tribal female workers has decreased, while that of marginal workers has increased. Dependence of tribal women population on agricultural sector is decreasing. The percentage of female

main workers engaged in other services has increased, showing indication of development. A significant percentage of tribal women marginal workers could get work for less than three months that needs special attention.A good score on social indicators like high literacy rates and educational upliftment of tribal women as well as change in attitudes of the tribal people should be utilized for the economic betterment of the tribal women by absorbing them in more beneficial economic activity.The benefits of central and state schemes should be channelized to all sections of the tribals, rather than concentrating these among the educated and urban tribals.Proper implementation of the Government initiatives adopted for their upliftment *and* proper monitoring may help improve their employment and economic condition. This analysis is not exhaustive. There is much scope of research in this area. A more in-depth study may be done, which has remained beyond the scope of this paper.

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Visibal Labour, Invisible wage : Tribal Women's Contribution in Household Economy Through Unpaid work

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Key words

Tribal women, unpaid work, social inclusion, Jharkhand.

Women are the subject of discrimination and their sad plight are manifested by the denial of access to remunerative employment, equal wages, and lack of freedom in decision making both at the family and extra family level. Thus they are the victim of both economic and social exclusion. Since independence, government has implemented several inclusive policies for women empowerment but the outcome seems unsatisfactory. Women's work remains unrecognized and formally unorganized despite the fact that women's contributions to the family are vital; in many cases women are the breadwinners and work longer hours than men (UNDP 1995). This underestimation reflects women's lower status in the family and locality; they have very little or no say in household decision-making. This is the result of a faulty concept of participation in the labor force that does not include household or domestic work as economic activity, mainly because of the focus on use value rather than exchange value. This indicates a reason for the neglect of women's economic contributions to the household in particular and to society in general. The most striking characteristic of household labor is that, whether employed or not, women continue to do most of the housework around the globe.Although role of women is not only of importance in economic activities, but her role in non-economic activities is equally important. But very few studies have been conducted in

the field of estimating the monetary value of this unpaid domestic work of tribal women. This article is based on time use survey data of selected women population from three age groups of two tribal dominated villages of Ranchi district of Jharkhand. The research aims to quantify women's invisible household work and attempt to assess an approximate economic value for it. Stratified random sampling was employed to select the respondents. They were probed with the help of pre-designed schedules and questionnaires. The researchers also applied case study and participatory observation method to collect and verify the primary data accurately. Simple statistical tools were used to analyse the data. The study concludes with women's expectation that the government should encourage development in every area of society. It is therefore important to understand and appreciate women's values and aspirations as they play a pivotal role in the building of the home and society. In agreement with various institutions, government should encourage programmes that promote women's economic rights and actively measure women's status, by developing statistical indicators which reflect gender roles and responsibilities. A data bank should be created on all aspects of women's activities, to serve as a reference in policy making, monitoring and impact assessment.

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Introducation

Women's work remains unrecognized and formally disorganised regardless of the fact that women's contributions to the family are vital; in many cases women are the bread winners and work longer hours than men (UNDP 1995). This underestimation reflects women's lower status in the family and locality; they have very little or no say in household decision-making. Disparities in responsibilities and income share received ample attention in the Human Development Report 1995: "Men received the lion's share of income and recognition for their economic contribution while most women's work remains unpaid, unrecognized and undervalued" (UNDP 1995: 93).A significant contribution of a large section of society that is women, towards household economy remains unvalued or at best undervalued owing to the limited scope of the definition of 'economic activity' as used in the national income accounting. For the purpose of calculating household income, market value of goods and services which are sold in the market only are taken into consideration. Much of the household and community work which is not marketed and thus has no market value attached to it remains unvalued. Hence, a significant portion of the invisible work being done by women in the society remains unknown and women who are engaged in this work are deprived of recognition or monitory benefit.

In the context of developing countries like India, where market integration is relatively less and substantial amount of goods and services are not marketed, women's contribution to productive activity remains unrecognized, invisible and unpaid in terms of market criteria or even the socially dominant concept of what constitutes "work"- its value and perception (Choudhary and Parthasarathy 2007). Further, due to inadequate employment opportunities a large part of economically active population, especially women is engaged in home-based unpaid works in developing countries (Agarwal 1997). Undervaluation of the unpaid works is reflected into low pay for similar work done on a paid basis such as care, domestic services, cleaning etc. Though

the Indian constitution grants women equal rights with men, a strong patriarchal system persists which shapes the lives of women with traditions that are millennia old. In most Indian families, daughters are viewed as liabilities and girls are conditioned to believe that they are inferior and subordinate to men.In addition to the patriarchal culture, common in different degrees throughout the world, is the equally common problem that while women typically carry out most of the work involved in caring for the home and its residents, such work is given little or no social or economic importance, and as a result, women are perceived with little importance. While the work done by men is widely acknowledged and most men are considered as economically productive, women who are engaged in full-time household work are classified by the Government of India as economically unproductive (Census 2001). Yet the same tasks performed by these housewives, if done at another house, become a paid job and therefore valued.This is the result of a faulty concept of participation in the labor force that does not include household or domestic work as economic activity, mainly because of the focus on use value rather than exchange value (Donahoe 1999). This indicates a reason for the neglect of women's economic contributions to the household in particular and to society in general (Ironmonger 1999).As a result, over 367 million women in India - or 32% of the entire population and 65% of all females - have been classified by the Census of India (2001) as non-workers, placed in the same category as beggars, prostitutes, and prisoners. Of the total of those listed as non-workers in India, 74.3% are women. Such a categorization of the majority of women cannot fail to have consequences in policies and programs aimed at women.In India, there are two categories of unpaid workers. Those self-employed women who are mere helpers in the family enterprises and do not earn any regular wages and those women who are out of the purview of the definition of workers but are engaged in domestic work, some of which are economically gainful to the households are considered as unpaid workers. The unpaid workers, particu-

larly the latter have been substantially underestimated in the labor force surveys and national income accounting statistics. Though there had been efforts to "count" the work, its "valuation" to demonstrate its contribution to the economy has been largely ignored. Unpaid work has not been sufficiently accounted primarily because of absence of time-use data, lack of standard concepts and methods for the collection of time-use data, reluctance to use existing data, non-recognition of the integration of the paid and unpaid work.

The paper analyses the extent, nature and trends of female unpaid work in the rural context of Jharkhand, the underlying factors behind taking up these activities and its implications in the context of structural adjustment of household responsibilities as the household economy put significant emphasis on home-based work, assuming that women's labour is flexible. The paper will also attempt to analyse the social security measures required to enhance the well-being and ensure decent work for the tribal female unpaid workers.

Earlier Studies

Several studies have been conducted in the context of assessing women's contribution to the society in general and household economy in particular through invisible and unpaid work.Buvinic (1999) identified gender bias in intra-household allocation of resources, participation in decision-making, and time spent within and outside the house. The most striking characteristic of household labor is that, whether employed or not, women continue to do most of the housework around the globe (Shelton and John 1996). Women in Nepal rise before dawn to fetch water and firewood. They are usually the first in the family to get out of bed and the last to rest. Women in poor households work more hours than men, and the poorer the household the longer women work (Buvinic 1999). All women spend more time on housework, have more responsibility for child rearing, have less access to many social and material resources, and have less access to public spaces and public power (Krishnaraj 2006).Omvedt (1992) found 239 women workers

in one area where the census counted 38 and 444 women workers. Sudarshan (1997) shows that while the 1991 census gave the Female Work Force Participation Rate for Punjab as 4.4 percent, NCAER, during a probe, got 28.8 percent. Mukhopadhyay (1998) survey of 5,981 women workers in six cities found that the Labour Force Participation Rate of women was four times greater than that stated in the Census.According to Leavitt (1971) the most important clue to a woman's status anywhere in the world is her degree of participation in economic life and her control over property and the product she produces. To enhance efficiency and aid survival, every known society divides and specializes labour tasks to some extent and these division of labour has knowingly or unknowingly been done along sex lines where men carry out tasks that take them outside the home and women are largely restricted to homecare, childbearing and childrearing. Women are generally perceived to be patient, dependent and passive and their work considered to be unexciting and repetitive. In fact, women are naturally mothers, and their greatest pleasure and true fulfilment lies in maternity, the one out of a few things that women are good at (Deckard 1983). These kinds of ideologies about women have tended to marginalize women and have belittled women's work in the home and outside the home and therefore women's contribution to economic wellbeing of the home and society.

The term 'care economy' refers to the distribution of care services, and includes both the providers and the recipients. The latter may be either dependent -the elderly, the sick and children- or active in the labour market. On the provision side, there are four agents: the State, the market, civil society and the family. In the case of this last, however, the prevailing gender system means that it is not entirely accurate to say that families are responsible for the care of children or older adults. Rather, this responsibility falls directly on women as unpaid workers (Costa-Font and Rico 2006).Throughout history, four types of institutions have been involved in the provision of care: civil

society institutions (churches, volunteers and foundations), the State, the market and families, with families invariably playing the greatest role. In all four cases, most care giving -whether inside or outside the home, paid or unpaid- is done by women. As societies become more complex, institutionalized care mechanisms improve, while in less modern societies it is care in the home that will predominate (Giménez 2003).

After exploring the literature on women's unpaid work, the gender division of labor, and the care economy pertaining to developing countries and India, we carried out the present empirical study in the selected villages of Jharkhand to quantify women's unpaid household workand women's significant and unrecognized contributions to the household (Krishna 2002; Sati 2008).

Research Context and Methods

The present study was carried out in two purposively selected tribal dominated villages that come under the Angara block of Ranchi district of Jharkhand. The village namely, Ramdaga and Banadag comes under Kuchu Panchayat of Angara block. Both the villages are more than 45 km far from the main city. The villagers are mostly dependent upon seasonal agriculture.All most all of them cultivate paddy and maize in rainy seasonand some cultivate vegetables in the kitchen garden. During poor agricultural season some people go either city or the locally known Kalaswar stone crushing unit for supplementing their livelihood. The main tribes are in both this villages are Munda, Oraon and Baraik. A total of 47 households and 37 households are living inRamdaga and Banadag respectively. The village Ramdaga is inhabited by 251 souls comprising 134 males and 117 females and Banadag is a settlement of 207 population having 107 males and 100 females.The overall sex ratio of both villages are 87.31 (Ramdaga) and 93.45(Banadag) respectively. The total literacy rate of Ramdaga village is 69.72% and Banadag village is 66.66%. Primary health centre is available near about 2 km away from the villages. In both villages the main source of drinking water is hand pump. Well is also available but they use it for irriga-

tion purpose as well as for discharging other daily requirement of water. Both villages have electric connectivity but there is a yawning gap between demand and supply of road transportation. On a comparative note, transportation facility in Banadag is better than the Ramdaga because of its proximity to the main road that is connected with Ranchi by frequent tempo services.

The time use survey (TUS) method was used in the present study for the purpose of data collection because the data provide a good measure for capturing the economic contributions of women in the household (Kulshreshtha and Singh 1999; Hirway 2003; Sikoska 2003; Craig and Mullan 2010). In TUSs, cultural bias is reduced because information is gathered without imposing a predefined concept of 'work.' Time use data provide deep insights into women's daily life, the nature of their work, their leisure time, their say in decision-making at household level, and the risks associated with collection of fuel, fodder, and water (Pandey 1999). TUSs increase our understanding of the limitations of standard national accounts and include activities such as unpaid housework and care of children, the elderly, and disabled-all of which are not covered in surveys of the labor force (Budlender 2007).The study was undertaken from December 2013 to May 2014. At first the preliminary information about the block was gathered from the Block office and secondary sources. Based on the information, a pilot survey was conducted in the villages to get acquainted with the overall situation and establish rapport with the villagers. The village was selected purposively based on their location and the earlier experience of work in the same village. Banadag is selected as road side village and Ramdaga as remote village in order to find out the role of locational advantages on the nature of women work participation. Since the main objective of the study was to study the non-economic contribution of women in household, systematic sampling was used. The target group of the study includes the women of 10 yrs. and above and women belongs to that age group were selected randomly after stratifying

them into three age groups (10-15 yrs., 16-45 yrs. and 45 yrs. above) from the studied village. The age classification is based on United Nations guidelines. A total of 86 women respondents including all age category were selected from two villages. Similarly 50 adult male respondents were selected from two villages randomly to get the differential representation of women and men involvement in domestic unpaid work. The relevant primary data pertaining to the present study were collected through in-depth interview from selected respondent of all social status categories with the help of specially designed pre-tested structured schedules. Data collection techniques like case study, observation, isolation and group interview were also employed for the purpose of triangulation. Secondary data related to this study were collected from related existing literature, websites and block office. The method of analysis was both qualitative and quantitative. The population information was analyzed with the help of simple statistical tools. The analysed information was tabulated and qualitatively interpreted to get the clear outline of the women's contribution in sustaining household livelihood through unpaid work.

Women : The Invisible Worker

More than in any other area, it is in the recording of the work done by women that serious inaccuracies and measurement failures occur. As a result, their participation in the economy is undermined. Non-market household production falling under the general production boundary generally consists of the activities like household maintenance, management and shopping, care of children and of the old, disabled and sick persons, community services etc. These activities are of two types, namely, activities which are normally performed by household members only (such as, cooking, shopping for the family, pet care etc.), and activities which are frequently provided by market producers also (such as, repairs, interior decoration, child care etc.)Valuation of both these types of unpaid work poses several problems: To start with, there is no market value of this work in the form of wages. It is

difficult therefore to determine the wage rates at which this work can be converted in monetary value. Also, market wage rates cannot be strictly applied to this work as this work is performed outside the market in a non-competitive environment without any profit motive. The efficiency of the production of this work is likely to be less than the efficiency of the market production. On the other hand, however, this unpaid domestic work is backed by emotions, love and care as well as a sense of responsibility, and in that sense its real value is much more than its market value. In short, valuation of unpaid work involves borrowing price of one system for valuing work of an altogether different system.Census after Census, women's contribution has been rendered invisible by failing to quantify their work inputs, especially in agriculture and the unorganized sector. Women are known to work longer hours than men and to participate in the work force to a far greater extent than is measured by the data gathered in the census. But a lot of the work they do is unrecognised, leave alone rewarded with equal remuneration. Thus, these mechanisms of data collection cause a loss of significant information.

Time use in different seasons: Case of Banadag and Ramdagawomen

The study found that a typical woman's day starts at about 5 a.m. and ends after 10 p.m. Women often spend six to eight hours per day on paid activities: 50% of women in this study were involved in paid activities after which they carried out their household activities. This double burden left these women with only a negligible amount of time for them. Half the female respondents got up between 4:30 and 5:30 a.m., and 85% of female respondents were up by 6:30 a.m., as compared to 70% of men who were up by this time. Among those not engaged in paid work, many were full-time housewives and most worked in their own fields (not for pay). Majority of the male respondents worked for pay for 6 to 8 hours a day and some for more than 8 hours. Among the female respondents, around 41% worked for pay

for 6 to 8 hours a day, while only few worked more than 8 hours a day for pay. The following table will explain the time spent by women in different activities during agricultural and non-agricultural season in terms of age groups.

Table 1: Working hours of the women (16 to 45 years) during non-agricultural season.

	Non-Agricultural Season			
Hours spend	Unpaid work (No. of women)		Paid work (No. of women)	
	Banadag	Ramdaga	Banadag	Ramdaga
1-4 hours	2	6	0	0
5-8 hours	12	4	14	6
9-12 hours	4	5	0	2
13-16 hours	5	1	0	0
Not working	0	1	9	9
Total	23	17	23	17
	Agricultural Season			
Hours spend	Unpaid work (No. of women)		Paid work (No. of women)	
	Banadag	Ramdaga	Banadag	Ramdaga
1-4 hours	2	2	0	0
5-8 hours	3	0	2	0
9-12 hours	2	1	0	4
13-16 hours	16	12	0	0
Not working	0	2	21	13
Total	23	17	23	17

Above table shows that most of the women of productive age group i.e. 16-45 years age group of Banadag Village spend their 5-8 hours a day during non-agriculture season as a paid worker. Most of them spend the same working hours as unpaid worker also. As a reason it was found that they usually go for wage labour in nearby stone crushing unit locally known as Kalaswar. Likewise in Ramdaga village, most of the paid workers work for 5-8 hours. Unpaid workers work for a long range of 1-12 hours because they mainly travel to Ranchi city to work

as a wage labour.

During agriculture season, most of the women of 16-45 years age group of Banadag village spend their 13-16 hours a day in agriculture field. Some women involve for 4-12 hours as unpaid work during agricultural season because they usually go for agricultural work at morning and come back at 5 o' clock evening after that they again do their household work. Very few (2 out of 23) of them spend the 5-8 working hours as paid worker also. Similarly in Ramdaga village most of the unpaid works perform for 13-16 hours. Some women used to do paid work during agricultural season for 8-12 hours. They mainly migrate to Ranchi city in that season also for an alternative livelihood opportunity i.e. wage labour.

Table 2:Working hours of the girls (10 to 15 years) during non-agricultural season.

	Non-Agricultural Season			
Hours spend	Unpaid work (No. of women)		Paid work (No. of women)	
	Banadag	Ramdaga	Banadag	Ramdaga
1-4(Hours)	4	3	0	0
5-8(Hours)	10	7	3	0
9-12(Hours)	0	1	0	0
13-16(Hours)	0	0	0	0
Not working	0	0	11	11
Total	14	11	14	11
	Agricultural Season			
Hours spend	Unpaid work (No. of women)		Paid work (No. of women)	
	Banadag	Ramdaga	Banadag	Ramdaga
1-4(Hours)	2	1	0	0
5-8(Hours)	2	9	0	0
9-12(Hours)	6	1	0	0
13-16(Hours)	4	0	0	0
Not working	0	0	14	11
Total	14	11	14	11

Table no. 2 depicts that most of the girls (10 out of 14) of 10-15 years age group of Banadag Village spend their 5-8 hours a day during non-agriculture season as unpaid work. Some girls are working 1-4 hours as unpaid work during non-agricultural season. Actually they usually go for school and after returning from school they again look after some household work and self-study. Very few (3 out of 14) of them spend the 5-8 working hours as paid worker also. Correspondingly in Ramdaga village all girls do unpaid works for 1-8 hours.

During agricultural season most of the girls (10 out of 14) of 10-15 years age group of Banadag Village spend their 9-16 hours a day during agriculture season as unpaid work. Some girls (4 out of 14) employ 4-8 hours as unpaid work during agricultural season. By the same token in Ramdaga village most of the girls (9 out of 11) do unpaid works for 5-8 hours. No one was found to engage in paid work during agricultural season in both villages as they attend school throughout the year.

Table 3: Working hours of the women (above 45 years) during non-agricultural season.

Non-Agricultural Season				
Hours spend	**Unpaid work (No. of women)**		**Paid work (No. of women)**	
	Banadag	**Ramdaga**	**Banadag**	**Ramdaga**
1-4(Hours)	3	1	1	0
5-8(Hours)	6	3	6	2
9-12(Hours)	3	2	0	0
13-16(Hours)	0	0	0	0
Not working	1	2	6	6
Total	**13**	**8**	**13**	**8**
Agricultural Season				
Hours spend	**Unpaid work (No. of women)**		**Paid work (No. of women)**	
	Banadag	**Ramdaga**	**Banadag**	**Ramdaga**
1-4(Hours)	1	1	0	0
5-8(Hours)	2	1	2	1
9-12(Hours)	4	2	0	0
13-16(Hours)	5	3	0	0
Not working	1	1	11	7
Total	**13**	**8**	**13**	**8**

Above table depicts that most of the women (above 45 years age group) of Banadag use their 5-8 hours a day during non-agriculture season as unpaid work. Other women spend under 1-4 hours and 9-12 hours equally as unpaid work at that time. As a reason it was found that they usually go for work as wage labour. Most of them spend the 5-8 working hours as paid worker also. Likewise in Ramdaga village most of the unpaid works perform for 5-8 hours.

The table also express that during agriculture season most of the women (above 45 years age group) of Banadag village spend their 9-16 hours a day as unpaid work. Some women are doing 4-12 hours as unpaid work during agricultural season. As a reason it was found that they usually go for agricultural work at morning and came back at 5 o clock evening after that they again do their household work. Very few of them use the 5-8 working hours as paid worker also. Similarly in Ramdaga village most of the unpaid works perform for 9-16 hours. Very few women of this age group were done paid work during agricultural season for 5-8 hours.

Housework:

Women are far more involved in domestic activities than men. They said, men do contribute to domestic work despite prevalent attitudes that such work is the responsibility of women. Such participation, however, was far less common than for women. For instance, 26% of men participate in housecleaning on a daily basis as compared to 90% of women. Only 6% of men ever wash the dishes, 28% cook and 24% carry water. While it is encouraging to see that men do play some role in domestic tasks, it is clear that such tasks continue to be considered as mainly the domain of women, with men "helping" their wives, rather than husbands and wives sharing the responsibility - even in cases where women, like men, work a considerable number of hours per day for pay.

Table 4: Percentage distribution of Housework between adult Male and Female

Task		Male (%)	Female(%)
Cleaning the house	Yes/Daily	26	90
	No/Occasionally	74	10
Cleaning around the home	Yes/Daily	20	81
	No/Occasionally	80	19
Tending mud floors	Yes/Daily	0	41
	No/Occasionally	100	59
Making beds, hanging and taking down mosquito nets	Yes/Daily	14	55
	No/Occasionally	86	45
Washing dishes	Yes/Daily	6	87
	No/Occasionally	94	13
Sorting, washing and drying	Yes/Daily	20	85
	No/Occasionally	80	15
Preparing food items for Cooking	Yes/Daily	16	87
	No/Occasionally	84	13
Collecting firewood or other materials for fuel	Yes/Daily	14	29
	No/Occasionally	86	71
Carrying water	Yes/Daily	24	55
	No/Occasionally	76	45
Supervising household work	Yes/Daily	34	35
	No/Occasionally	66	65
Cooking and serving food	Yes/Daily	28	86
	No/Occasionally	72	14

Caring of Family Members:

Table 5 shows the self-reported frequency of participation by men and women in caring for family members. As shown, 60% of the female respondents reporting taking care of their young children (bathing, feeding, tending), whereas 40% of the women had children who were independent and could care for themselves. Only 24% of the male respondents

reported engaging in child care activities. While the figures are very low, both men and women reported equal involvement in caring for sick family members and in looking after guests. Virtually none of the respondents performed voluntary work for the welfare of their community, i.e. by engaging in organizing religious programmes on festive days or conducting recreational activities for the people residing in the community. While 6% of men participated in voluntary work, only 1% of women reported doing so. The even lower figure for female participation could be due to restrictions on female mobility as well as women's heavy workload.

Table 5: Gender-wise involvement in caring for family members

Task	Response	Male (%)	Female (%)
Caring for children	Yes	24	60
	No	76	40
Caring for the sick	Yes	4	7
	No	96	93
Feeding, looking after guests	Yes	4	5
	No	96	95
Managing the household (organizing activities, expenses, etc.	Yes	40	27
	No	60	73
Taking the sick to the doctor	Yes	12	7
	No	88	93

Age-Gender based daily routine in different seasons:

In most of the respondents' families, it was women who got up first, especially wives or daughters-in-law. In only very few of the families was it the male respondent who got up first. Both male and female respondents said that it was mainly the duty of women to get up first in order to ensure that her family members received breakfast on time, to clean the home and its surroundings, prepare lunch, and so on. The woman's employment status did not affect these results; the woman was in charge of all these early morning domestic tasks even if she also worked outside the home.

Table 6: Time use during Non-Agriculture season bywomen (16-45yrs.) of both villages.

Time	House work		Labour		Forest gathering		Cattle Rearing		Leisure time/ Recreation	
	R	B	R	B	R	B	R	B	R	B
5 to 6 am	16	23	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
6 to 7 am	16	19	-	4	-	-	-	-	1	-
7 to 8 am	14	14	2	9	-	-	-	-	1	-
8 to 9 am	7	10	7	10	2	1	-	1	1	1
9 - 10 am	6	2	7	14	3	1	-	3	2	3
10 -11am	-	2	7	12	4	1	3	4	4	4
11-12 am	-	3	7	6	2	6	3	3	6	5
12 - 1pm	-	-	7	4	1	13	-	2	9	4
1 to 2 pm	2	10	7	4	1	3	-	-	4	8
2 to 3 pm	-	-	7	14	-	-	5	3	5	6
3 to 4 pm	-	-	7	14	-	-	4	4	6	5
4 to 5 pm	1	-	7	15	-	-	4	4	5	4
5 to 6 pm	9	20	7	-	-	-	-	3	2	-
6 to 7 pm	9	23	7	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
7 to 8 pm	16	23	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	6
8 to 9 pm	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	3

R-Ramdaga; B- Banadag.

Table 7: Time use during Agriculture season by women (16-45 yrs.) of both villages.

Time	House work		Labour		Cultivation		Cattle Rearing Forest Collection		Leisure time/ Recreation	
	R	B	R	B	R	B	R	B	R	B
5 to 6 am	16	22	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
6 to 7 am	16	18	-	4	-	-	-	-	1	1
7 to 8 am	13	18	3	4	-	-	-	-	1	1
8 to 9 am	8	12	3	4	5	5	-	-	1	2
9 - 10 am	1	2	3	4	11	15	-	-	2	2
10 - 11 am	-	-	3	4	11	17	-	-	3	2
11 - 12 am	-	2	3	-	11	17	-	-	3	4
12 - 1 pm	1	-	3	-	11	16	-	4	3	3
1 to 2 pm	2	2	3	-	11	17	-	-	3	4
2 to 3 pm	1	-	3	4	11	17	-	-	2	2

3 to 4 pm	-	-	3	4	11	17	1	-	2	2
4 to 5 pm	-	-	3	4	11	17	1	-	2	2
5 to 6 pm	10	21	3	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
6 to 7 pm	11	21	3	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
7 to 8 pm	17	21	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12
8 to 9 pm	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	23

R-Ramdaga; B- Banadag.

The above tables are the illustration of time use pattern of 17 women of Ramdaga and 23 women of Banadag of the productive age group. Most women reported that they had free time. The response to the question is however contradicted by the exploration of people's daily schedules, which made clear that respondents actually had little if any free time. The contradiction is explained in that most respondents do not consider many of their tasks as work. For instance, many respondents consider it leisure rather than work to labour in their own fields or cattle sheds or to take care of their children. In order to get a better sense of what people consider to be free time, respondents were asked how they spend that time. Here the lack of leisure of the respondents becomes more evident. By far the most common use of free time, are to rest or sleep.

Table 8: Average time use per week by women(16-45 yrs.) of Ramdaga during different seasons

Type of work	Hour/ week		Hour/ day	
	NA	A	NA	A
Cleaning	10	12	1.42	1.71
Washing cloth	3	3	0.42	0.42
Cooking	10	18	1.42	2.57
Fetching water	4	7	0.57	1
Personal & child care	5	6	0.71	0.85
Labor	56	48	8	6.85
Purchasing goods	2	4	0.28	0.57
Travelling	18	4	2.57	0.57
Watching TV	7	14	1	2
Sleep	53	51	7.57	7.28

NA - Non-Agriculture; A- Agriculture.

Table 9: Average time use per week by women (16-45 yrs.) of Banadag during different seasons

Type of work	Hour/ week		Hour/ day	
	NA	A	NA	A
Cleaning of house	12	12	1.71	1.71
washing cloth	4	4	0.57	0.57
Cooking	18	20	2.57	2.85
Fetching water	7	7	1	1
personal & child care	5	5	0.71	0.71
Labour	40	42	5.71	6
Forest product	10	7	1.42	1
Cattle	7	8	1	1.14
Market	7	7	1	1
Watching TV	5	5	0.71	0.71
Sleep	53	51	7.57	7.28

NA - Non-Agriculture; A- Agriculture.

It is interesting to note that the data perspectives from the above tables showed that women spent their "leisure" time infolding clothes, helping children and aged, sewing, and in other activities that would seem to pass for work. Even watching TV may not be a fully leisure-time activity, as many women take their work in front of the TV set. It has already been noted that virtually all housework is performed by women. Many women said that they do not get the time to go out for family outings or vacations. Another reason for not going for outings is that many of the respondents are unable to afford the extra expenditure. It should be included that they usually spent 42 hours (per week) in agricultural field. They used to go local market to sell their vegetable. Similarly in non-agriculture season they usually work 5 days in a week as wage labour because they use to go market twice in a week to sell the forest product like Mohua, Leaf, timber etc. as well as to

parch the vegetables and other products for their household. During the cropping season, women used to bring the cattle in the field. Female members of the families were often involved in the collection of leaves, twigs and other forest produces. During this period of time, they used to bring the cattle for grazing. In spite of these, women worked as the seasonal labour. It generally happens during non-agricultural season. The women of Banadag go for work as wage labour to nearby stone crushing unit locally known as "Kalashwar". During this season, children used to look after cattle as well as other activities. Overall, the fact that the most common response to the use of free time is to rest or to sleep suggests difficult and exhausting schedules, rather than the sort of leisure. During non-agricultural season, the women of Ramdaga migrate towards Ranchi.

In case of younger girls of 10-15 yrs., it was found that they usually awake at 5:00 am. Thereafter, they used to help their mothers in domestic work. Around 9:00 am they started for their school. Usually they return back from the school during 4:00 pm. After that, they involved in domestic works. Usually they spent very few time in self-study. They spent their leisure time by watching TV. But, in agriculture season some of them use to work in agricultural field. By far the most common use of free time, are to rest or sleep. As the girls of Ramdaga don't migrate with their parents, hence their daily schedule remains more or less same throughout the year. Further explanation of these tables has been given bellow in following tables.

Women of both villages, meanwhile, expressed with great disappointment that they seldom had an opportunity to go out and enjoy themselves. Two main problems they faced were the lack of recreational facilities and the numerous societal restrictions placed on the mobility of rural women. As a result, vacations for rural women mainly consisted of visiting their maternal village or their relatives in another village once or twice a year.

Women's Unpaid Contribution : From Invisible to Visible

A substantial amount of women's time is devoted to unpaid labour. The productive contribution of women towards household maintenance, provision of the family needs, and bearing and rearing of the next generation is ignored, and much of women's work is invisible. As a result, inadequate attention is paid to the conditions of women, women's work, and its economic value. The importance of this article, however, is attended by significant methodological difficulties in performing it. When looking for an appropriate way to assign economic value to the work performed by women, many questions arose in terms of what price to assign to different tasks, whether to assign wages based on the number of hours women work (and in that case how to address multiple tasking), and what wages to use in such calculations.

The following are different ways of assigning an economic value to the unpaid activities performed by women:

a) Replacement value: Calculated on the basis of how much it would cost to replace unpaid with paid workers based on current hourly wage rate in Jharkhand (Rs. 150 for 8 hrs.).

b) Opportunity value: Counted as the amount women could

Table 10: Assumed economic contribution by age in non-agricultural season.

Age group	Average hours spend /day		Economic value in Rs. / day	
	Banadag	Ramdaga	Banadag	Ramdaga
10 - 15 year	5.42	6.45	101.62	120.93
16 - 45 year	9.21	6.68	172.68	125.25
Above 45 year	6.82	6.58	127.87	123.37

Table 11: Assumed economic contribution by age in agricultural season.

Age group	Average hours spend /day		Economic value in Rs. / day	
	Banadag	Ramdaga	Banadag	Ramdaga
10 - 15 year	10.42	7	195.37	131.25
16 - 45 year	12.73	12	238.7	225
Above 45 year	11	11.33	206	212.43

For the purpose of this study, a method of calculating economic value based on replacement value was adopted. In this method, the cost of unpaid workers is calculated by the cost of paying someone else based on current wages for comparable work. It should be noted that each of the above-mentioned methods of assigning an economic value to the unpaid work performed by women has its own advantages and disadvantages. No one method is perfect; no method can provide an accurate answer of something that is by its very nature uncountable. Most workers would agree that to a large extent, wages do not reflect the actual value of the work performed.

Emerged Perspectives

In Indian society, as elsewhere, culture, attitudes, and day-to-day activities are inseparably intertwined. Some interesting issues that emerged during the study, which may be worth exploring in future behavioural or psychological studies, include the following:

Many of the female respondents, irrespective of their locality, said that they were paid for their contribution. They considered the satisfactions of rearing a child and looking after the well-being of the family as the greatest rewards. The existence and value of non-monetary rewards is of vital importance, as the monetization of society is in fact a cheapening of many of people's deepest values. The lives of Indian women revolve about their families. From the earliest age, girls are culturally conditioned to believe that they have no right to free time, leisure, or entertainment independent of their families. Women in Indian society feel that ultimately the unpaid work that they perform is for the betterment of their own family. The love and respect that they receive from their husband and children are considered more important than money. Women in Indian society live for the well being of their family.

Many of the female respondents' attitudes towards their husband's involvement in domestic work were formed from societal role expectations. Thus while many women complained that their husbands were not supportive, they simultaneously did not want their husbands to do such work as washing clothes, sweeping or mopping. Such tasks are considered by an average Indian to be undignified for men, and if a woman were to allow her husband to engage in them, society would judge her as not being a good wife. It would be interesting to explore which aspects of household work would be acceptable for men to undertake, and how to encourage such involvement by men. There may also be a related issue of the self-perception of full-time housewives, whose feelings of self-esteem may dependent part on feeling that their husbands are helpless in the

home and that all domestic tasks are dependent on them alone

This research is not meant to demand a fair wage for women's household work, but rather to point out the value of the work already done by women. That work, carried out without pay, represents an essential contribution by women to society. If women did not give freely of their labour, it would have to be paid for or managed without - neither of which are imaginable scenarios.

Regardless of the details, one issue is clear: women throughout India work hard, and that work has tremendous value to society and the nation. The magnitude of the work and of that contribution suggests that women should be accorded far more value and importance in society than currently, and that a number of policies and programmes should be considered to acknowledge and award this essential contribution.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Despite the magnitude of work, the financial value of the domestic work done by these tribal women without pay continues to go unnoticed, and they continue to be treated as if they contribute nothing of value to society or the nation. But, in the ceaseless flow of time social, economic, and legislative improvements and scientific advances have allowed women to gain greater control over their lives. Women are much more valued and respected in the family than before. Women seem to have a more active role in family decision making, and even to enjoy the freedom of leisure time and vacation that were previously only experienced by men. But sadly, this promising picture is far from universal across different strata of Indian society. This changing trend among Indian families is mostly limited to the upper and upper middle classes, which form only

a miniscule portion of the Indian population. The present study shows, most rural women are reluctant to change their attitudes about themselves; as such attitudes are deeply rooted in culturally-determined gender roles. Change in women's roles would necessitate change in women's psychology and in women's ability to assert them in a male-dominated society. But such change is difficult given the nearly universally-accepted gender constructs and the persistence of traditional gender roles. Perceived threats to male dominance make many in Indian society, as elsewhere, highly resistant to change. However, poverty cannot be reduced or eliminated without the involvement of women. Overall, women remain the largest group that experiences poverty, despite the fact that women constitute 50% of the work force. But growth in women's jobs has mainly been in low-paid, part-time, temporary work that does little to improve women's desperate poverty, much less offer them a way out ("Women, Family and Poverty" 1998). Women's vulnerability to poverty and their low positions in the labour market are a result of a combination of economic, social and cultural factors, including their continued role as homemakers and primary caregivers. A division of labour by gender within both paid and unpaid work exists in almost all societies, although the nature of the specialized work done by women and men differs substantially by place, time, and in some cases over the life cycle. Whatever the cultural, economic, caste-based, religious, social, and other differences, a few factors are universal: women are seen as being responsible for the home and family, and the image of women earning as much as or more than men would threaten many men. The economic dependence of women on men harms many, but is absolutely

devastating for women such as widows or wives of abusive partners, for whom there is no steady and safe support available from male relatives. Meanwhile, the belief that women perform a mainly negligible function in society, living off the hard work of males while contributing little of value, clearly contributes to the undervaluing of women and their subsequent poor treatment. It is difficult to raise the status of women without raising their perceived value. Since virtually all women spend a significant amount of their time engaged in some of the most critical tasks in society - those of cleaning, preparing food, and caring for others -the importance of those tasks must be emphasized as well as the valuable contribution of those who carry out such work without hope or expectation of economic return. Unpaid work performed by women in and around their homes should be valued to improve the conditions of these unpaid workers and to support policy creation and implementation. If the amount and value of unpaid work were known, the impact of governmental policy changes such as cutbacks in health care and welfare could be better measured. As such, the valuation of unpaid labour should be done keeping in mind the aim to increase access to social benefits for all, while also increasing and ensuring women's full participation in the policy -making process. A benefit system should be created which recognizes women's diverse roles in society, accepts that housewives are workers, and offers adequate support for families and children. At the same time, the government and employers should adopt family-friendly initiatives based on international models such as European pro-family social policies. Proper importance must be accorded to issues of welfare and social provision in order to work towards a system

that is inclusive of all in society. Such a system should recognize the value of women's unpaid labour in ensuring that people's most basic needs are met. The importance of caring in addition to earning must be recognized, as well as of activities that have no price tag attached. In particular, the value of the people who ensure that the house is a home must be widely acknowledged. Through such actions it is hoped that the status of women will finally improve, not just for the wealthy but for all women. Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations have been made:

› Education is an essential tool for change. Educated women are better able to care for their families and family finances, experience more opportunities indecision-making, and make better home managers.

› The Government of India should continue to increase efforts to educate the girl child.

› The educational curriculum should be restructured in order to emphasize gender equality rather than reinforcing gender stereotypes.

› Adequate recognition should be made of the unpaid contributions of women to increase their self-esteem and to improve their image in the family and society at large. Access to and control over production and market resources (access to training, credit, employment, technical skills, entrepreneurship, etc.) by women should be increased while recognizing that the goal is not to burden women with two full-time jobs.

› Full participation of women in the policy-making process should be enabled and ensured.

› The minimum wage should be set at a level sufficient to allow workers to escape from the poverty trap.

› Affordable and adequate childcare and family-friendly employment policies should be ensured which allow parents to reconcile caring and work.

› A benefits system which recognizes women's diverse roles in society and offers adequate support for families and children should be established.

› The gender-related problems of unemployment (allocation of financial resources, entrepreneurship, legality of various types of informal work, etc.) should be addressed in order to liberate women from their financial dependence on men, particularly for widows, women in abusive relationships, and other particularly vulnerable women.

› Strategies should be developed that address women's access to resources in the agriculture, fisheries, and environment sectors.

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Psychological Well-being of Women : A Study Among the Bengali, Tribal & Manipuri Community of Tripura

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Abstract

The feeling of psychological well-being of a woman is the key factor in determining her empowerment. For this reason, the present study intends to know the status of psychological wellbeing of Bengali, Tribal and Manipuri women of Tripura state and also to make comparison between them. Well-being was measured in term of five factors viz. self-confidence, self-esteem, conscious thinking, knowledge about social environment and life satisfaction. A group of 105 women of those three different communities were studied. All the subjects belong to middle-class families and their educational qualification ranges from seventh standard to graduation. Age of the sample ranges from 25-55 years and all of them were married. The sample sub groups were compared with each other to see whether they differ in terms of self-confidence, self-esteem, conscious thinking, knowledge about social environment and life-satisfaction in particular and psychological well-being in general. Result reveals that Tribal and Bengali women possess significantly higher scores in several factors than Manipuri women of this state. The psychological welbeing is also poor in Manipuri women. Bengali and tribal women possess a higher

level of psychological well-being than the Manipuri women.

Key Words

Psychological wellbeing, self-confidence, self-esteem, conscious thinking, knowledge about social environment, life satisfaction, Bengali, Tribal and Manipuri women.

The literature on psychological well-being has progressed rapidly since the emergence of the field over five decades ago. As recent surveys show psychologists and other social scientists have taken huge steps in their understanding of the factors influencing psychological/ subjective well-being.

Psychological well-being refers to how people evaluate their lives. According to Diener (1997), these evaluations may be in the form of cognitions or in the form of affect. The cognitive part is an information based appraisal of one's life that is when a person gives conscious evaluative judgments about one's satisfaction with life as a whole. The affective part is a hedonic evaluation guided by emotions and feelings such as frequency with which people experience pleasant/unpleasant moods in reaction to their lives. The assumption behind this is that most people evaluate their life as either good or bad, so they are normally able to offer judgments. Further, people invariably experience moods and emotions, which have a positive effect or a negative effect. Thus, people have a level of subjective well-being even if they do not often consciously think about it, and the psychological system offers virtually a constant evaluation of what is happening to the person.

Psychological well-being is therefore valuable not only because it assesses well-being more directly but it has beneficial consequences. Psychological wellbeing depends upon many factors. The main psychic components upon which sta-

tus of wellbeing rests are:

SELF CONFIDENCE
SELF ESTEEM
CONSCIOUS THINKING
KNOWLEDGE ABOUT SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT
LIFE SATISFACTION

Women in three Cultures

The diverse ethno-linguistic groups of Tripura have given rise to a composite culture. The dominant ethnic groups are Bengali, Manipuri, and Tribal.Culture of Tripura is characterized by mainstream Indian cultural elements spearheaded byBengali culture coexisting with tribal traditional practices, notably the Tripuri culture. Tripura is a state in North East India. In the 2001 census of India, Bengalis represented almost 70% of Tripura's population and the tribal population comprised 30% of Tripura's population

Tribal women were very independent and self-confident in nature but now the scenario has been changed with the changing picture of modern society.

The Manipuri population residing in Tripura is facing problems due to their dwindling numbers, making them a minority group in the state. In light of the other majority communities in the state, they are in a struggle of sorts for the survival of the group in terms of its identity, social and cultural status and condition.There are Bishnupriya Manipuri and Meitei Manipuri in Tripura. Adding that a majority of the Meitei Manipuri in Tripura are engaged as daily wage earners who take up various odd jobs like construction of houses, farm labour, auto driver etc.Manipuris in Tripura are further not able to read Manipuri language properly because the language in Bengali script is

taught in schools only from class 1 to 5 or 6 and because no examinations are conducted using the language. Additionally, Manipuri's in Tripura speak Bengali fluently. Many Meitei villages in Tripura are also gradually being replaced by different communities and the names of Meitei inhabited villages are changing. Manipuri women in the past were very much independent and self-sufficient in nature. But may be due to factors mentioned above, the scenario has been changed particularly in our state.

After the above mentioned literature survey, a study was intended to perform to know the level of psychological wellbeing of the women of these three communities and to make comparison among them.

The Major Objectives of the Study

- To examine the level of self-confidence, self-esteem, conscious thinking, knowledge about social environment and life-satisfaction of women's of Bengali, Tribal and Manipuri Communities of Tripura.
- To find out whether there exists a difference among of the women's of the above mentioned communities of Tripura in respect of their self-confidence, self-esteem, conscious thinking, knowledge about social environment and life-satisfaction.
- To find out whether there exists a difference among the women's of the above mentioned communities of Tripura in respect of their psychological wellbeing.

Method

Sample

The Sample consists of 105 women who live in different areas of Tripura. Their age ranges from 25-55 years. The edu-

cational qualification of the women of the three communities (Bengali, Tribal & Manipuri) ranges from VII to graduation. All of them belong from middle socio-economic families & all the women are married. The sample was divided into three (3) groups keeping all the factors constant. The first group comprises of Bengali women (N=35), second group comprises of Tribal women (n=35)& third group comprises of Manipuri women(n=35). Purposive sampling procedure was taking in all levels of sampling & data collection.

Instrument Used

A scale named "Psychological Well-Being of Rural Women by MohsinaKhatun, NasreenWadud, Abbas Bhuiya and MushtaqueChowdhury (1998)":

The scale consists of 37 items and it is a 5 point scale. The scale is again divided into 5 sub areas of measurement viz. Self-confidence. Self esteem conscious thinking, knowledge about social environment and life satisfaction. High score indicates high well being and also high score in each dimension of sub scale indicates high in that level. On the other hand, low score indicates vice versa.

Description of Variables :

Well-Being: Psychological well-being (PW) is a wide ranging, multifarious concept. It includes different aspects of everyday experience. According to many researchers (Andrews and Withey, 1976; Najman and Levine 1981; Campbell and Converse 1971) psychological well-being is considered to be the composite measure of physical, mental and social well-being as perceived by each individual. In Bangladesh, women's sphere of life is very much different from that of men's. They are allocated to separate roles, and society expects them to

abide by them. From all aspects of life they are underprivileged and their psychological well-being has particularly been ignored. Recently, it has been recognised that a rise in the standard of living alone, is not enough. Increased emphasis must be given to social policy, to psychological aspects and the reformulation of societal goals (Nagpal and Sell, 1985):

There are several indicators of well-being of an individual, or a group of individuals, which have both objective and subjective components. The objective components are related to a term generally known as "standard of living", which consists of the following factors: level of education, employment status, financial resources, housing conditions and comfort of living. The parallel term used in the United Nations documents (United Nations, 1961) is "level of living" consisting of nine segments: health, food consumption, education, occupation and work conditions, housing, social security, clothing, recreation and leisure, and human rights. These objective characteristics are believed to influence human well-being (Parameter, 1994).

It is also believed that an individual's satisfaction or happiness does not depend only on his or her level of living but also on his or her expectation and perception of reality. It is this subjective component which is linked to the function of the degree of congruence between the individual's wishes and need on the one hand and environmental demands and opportunities on the other (Nagpal and Sell, 1985). Thus from all point of view, it can be concluded that psychological well- being is the total assessment of his or her quality of life. An individual is considered to be the best judge of his or her situation and state of well-being. Here wellbeing is studied in the above mentioned perspective.

The five dimensions of this scale and their operational definitions are as follows:

Self-Confidence (SC): Items concerning the expression of self and confidence were included in this section. Most items on this dimension referred to the feelings of self-reliance by achieving satisfaction on self-activities, making oneself indispensable to the family, solving problems without any assistance from friends or relatives at the time of difficulty. Self determination also reduces concerns about support (in terms of food, clothing, and shelter) in old age Clegg and Wall, 1981).

Self-Esteem (SE)

Items concerning self-respect, self-image, opportunity to show proficiency, self-support etc. Self respect includes the items like agreement and consultation on spending income, regarding children's future, that is, somewhat more democratic family functioning.

Conscious Thinking (CT)

Items concerning ability to reflect ideas on challenging issues-such as, married life, gender issues in social work, economic well-being, control over assets, women's rights, etc. belonged to this dimension. Conscious contemplation on women's rights, control over assets, family condition, married life and so on accelerated their realization about well-being.

Knowledge About Social Environment (KASE)

Items concerning how much one is concerned about resource and events around them, such as, women's empowerment, social relationship, training, population awareness etc. This factor describes the feeling of well-being generated by the social environment. When an individual becomes more

confident in every aspect of her life and more conscious about her status, she will be more aware of social problems, women's empowerment, social relationship, gender equality in employment and so forth.

Life Satisfaction (LS)

Items of this dimension were concerned about the quality of life and satisfaction of various personal and social aspects. Life satisfaction is the degree to which a person reports satisfaction with salient features of his/her life. Total life satisfaction is the sum of all separate items like satisfaction on his/her ability to achieve materials and educational facilities; cordial relationship with the family members or other people (e.g. people of same age); family group support in case of severe illness and so on. This, again, seemed to be a valid indicator of well-being - a function of what one expects in the various aspects of life and what one is able to attain out of this that is the discrepancy or congruence between expectation and achievement (Nagpal and Sell, 1985; Warr, 1978).

Procedure

Contact was made with each and every subject personally and informed consent was taken from them. According to their schedule interview was taken after establishing proper rapport and developing confidence on the part of the subject .Information about her was collected by basic information inventory. Then each and every subject was given the relevant questionnaire and instructed to go through the instructions. After the respondent has understood what she has to do, she is allowed to answer the questionnaire. After the end of the testing, answers were checked with the help of the scoring key. After the collection of data and appropriate scoring, data were tabulated properly and necessary

calculations were done.

Result

Table-1

Descriptive table for one- way ANOVA of well-being scores of Bengali, Tribal & Manipuri women

Well-being	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F- ratio	Sig.
Between Groups	4782.400	2	2391.200	14.993	.000
Within Groups	16267.257	102	159.483		
Total	21049.657	104			

Table 1 is a descriptive table for one way ANOVAs of wellbeing scores of Bengali, tribal and Manipuri women of Tripura. The mean square between groups was found 2391.2 and within groups was found 159.483. The F ratio 14.993 is significant in .01 level which indicates that the differences between the groups and within the groups are real differences. This result directs the researchers to compute further statistical analysis to find out where the group differences exist. To search the question of that answer parametric test (t value) between groups was computed. Result is tabulated in the forthcoming tables.

Table:2 Comparison of self confidence

Group	Communities	Number	Mean	S.D	t-value	Level of significance
Group-I	Bengali	35	32.714	3.130	-2.835	Significant at .01 level
Group-II	Tribal	35	34.657	2.577		
Group-I	Bengali	35	32.714	3.130	-.194	Insignificant
Group-III	Manipuri	35	32.885	4.192		
Group-II	Tribal	35	34.657	2.577	2.130	Significant at .05 level
Group-III	Manipuri	35	32.885	4.192	2.130	Significant at .05 level

TABLE:3 Comparison of self esteem

Groups	Communities	Number	Mean	S.D	t-value	Level of significance
Group-I	Bengali	35	24.742	2.800	-.378	In Significant
Group-II	Tribal	35	24.971	2.22		
Group-I	Bengali	35	24.742	2.800	2.27	Significant at .05 level
Group-III	Manipuri	35	23.142	3.088		
Group-II	Tribal	35	24.971	2.229	2.840	Significant at .01 level
Group-III	Manipuri	35	23.142	3.088		

TABLE:4 Comparison of conscious thinking

Groups	Communities	Number	Mean	S.D	t-value	Level of significance
Group-I	Bengali	35	36.457	4.454	2.246	Significant at .05 level
Group-II	Tribal	35	34.200	3.939		
Group-I	Bengali	35	36.457	4.454	4.413	Significant at .01 level
Group-III	Manipuri	35	31.857	4.264		
Group-II	Tribal	35	34.200	3.939	2.388	Significant at .05 level
Group-III	Manipuri	35	31.857	4.264		

TABLE:5 Comparison of knowledge about social environment

Groups	Communities	Number	Mean	S.D	t-value	Level of significance
Group-II	Bengali	35	22.400	3.599	3.930	Significant at .01 level
Group-III	Tribal	35	19.542	2.355		
Group-I	Bengali	35	22.400	3.599	6.595	Significant at .01 level
Group-III	Manipuri	35	17.028	3.20		
Group-II	Tribal	35	19.542	2.355	3.741	Significant at .01 level
Group-III	Manipuri	35	17.028	3.20		

TABLE: 6 Comparison of life satisfaction

Groups	Communities	Number	Mean	S.D	t-value	Level of significance
Group-I	Bengali	35	33.428	2.934	1.976	insignificant
Group-II	Tribal	35	32.085	2.737		
Group-I	Bengali	35	33.428	2.934	5.218	Significant at .01 level
Group-III	Manipuri	35	28.514	4.730		
Group-II	Tribal	35	32.085	2.737	3.866	Significant at .01 level
Group-III	Manipuri	35	28.514	4.730		

Table:7 Show the Mean, SD, t and F ratio of Total Well-being score.

Groups	Communities	Number	Mean	S.D	df	t-value	F
Group I	Bengali	35	149.857	11.790	68	1.703	14.993
Group-II	Tribal	35	145.457	9.732			
Group-I	Bengali	35	149.857	11.790	68	4.832*	
Group-III	Manipuri	35	133.857	15.643			
Group-II	Tribal	35	145.457	9.732	68	3.725*	
Group-III	Manipuri	35	133.857	15.643			

*** Significant at .01 level**

Discussion and Conclusion

Wellbeing of the women is a burning issue of modern Indian society. Wellbeing depends upon many environmental factors.

From the above result it can be said that, the tribal women of Tripura possess the highest level of self confidence. Their level of self confidence is significantly better than the Manipuri as well as Bengali women. Also, Tribal women scores better than Manipuri women in self esteem. Conscious thinking, knowledge about social environment, life satisfaction and total well being score. They scores equal to Bengali women in respect to self esteem, life satisfaction and total wellbeing

score. According to DhruvTanwani. 1997, the tribal culture of India gives more freedom to the women of their culture. The tribal culture of rural area is in a transitional period in this state. They are passing through the process of acculturation and assimilation. Due to the process of very fast urbanization the rural tribal women are coming in contact with non tribal. They work together in various govt. and nongovt. sectors. With the spread of education and various developmental schemes, the tribal women are gradually bringing about a slow and steady resolution in society. Moreover tribal families generally give more freedom to the women and from ancient times tribal women work together with their male counterpart in farming, weaving and other occupations. Generally tribal women of Tripura are very hard working, self confident and work constantly over the male from morning to evening. Monopoly of the home front and also contributing towards economic production are generally two fold roles of tribal women in Tripura. May be for these reasons their level of self confidence is higher than the Bengali and Manipuri women and self esteem, life satisfaction and overall wellbeing is better than the Manipuri women. But we have to keep in mind that, violence and crime against women in tribal society is not a rare phenomena and it is increasing day by day as evil effect of rapid urbanization. Like other community women, tribal women of modern urban and rural society are facing gender inequality problem, sexual harassment and violence.

Bengalis are the majority of the state and their culture is mostly dominated in this state. The rate of education. Job involvement and consciousness is more prominent in Bengali women than the other women of the state. Our study reveals

that although Bengali women possess significantly low self confidence than the tribal women, they have high score in conscious thinking and knowledge about social environment than the tribal women. In almost all the aspect of wellbeing except self confidence they scored better than Manipuri women of the state. Their total wellbeing score is equal to tribal women and significantly better than the Manipuri women. But the finding does not mean that the Bengali women are fewer victims of social discrimination, harassment and violence. Every day women face gender-specific persecution including sexual harassment, prostitution, and domestic violence. Violence against women in each and every community feeds off discrimination and serves to reinforce it.

Manipuri women of Tripura are suffering from low self confidence than tribal women, low self esteem, poor conscious thinking, poor knowledge about social environment, low life satisfaction and poor psychological wellbeing than both the tribal and Bengali women of this state.

The total population Most of the Manipuri's in Tripura are daily wage earner engaged in various odd jobs like digging earth, construction of houses, jungle clearing or in labor farms as manual laborers. The Govt of Tripura has brought the Manipuri under the category of OBC .Otherwise; there is no reservation for OBC in admission to colleges and in recruitment to Government jobs.

Most of the Manipuri women in Tripura are housewives and those in Government service are only in teaching profession. The awareness of Self Help Groups among them is still low. Many of the Manipuri's in Tripura could not read Manipuri language properly. One of the main reasons for this is that

Manipuri language in Bengali script is taught in schools only from class I to V but there is no proper conduct of the examination in Manipuri language.

Psychological Wellbeing of women is not independent from the influence of disharmony of society. Enhancing wellbeing of women, belong to any community, thus needs ruling out the total social, educational and economic factor related to women empowerment.

Limitation of the Study

This study is only an attempt to study the psychological wellbeing of the women of major community of this state, and it is not a complete study. The study suffers from several limitations. No comparative study with the male groups was done here which hinders the researchers to comment on the basis of comparative angle. The Tribal communities and also Manipuri have many ethnic subgroups. These subgroups are not studied separately. There was scope to compare women subgroups in regional or socioeconomic strata but this was not performed due to time and scope constrains. Future researches on the topic must open such broadening of the research area, as this study has an importance according to the scenario of women atrocities in India especially North-East India.

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----------National Seminar on "Empowerment of Tribal Women"

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Fostering Positive Mental Health and Empowering Tribal Girl Students of Tripura : An Empirical Analysis

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Abstract

Mental health is a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community. Hence mental health is an amalgamated part of general health and well-being. In recent years there has been a growing interest in the issue of nurturing positive mental health among students which in turn prevent the student community from different mental health problems like depression, drug addiction, anxiety disorder, phobic disorder, eating disorder etc. However, unfortunately very less research has been conducted on mental health status of tribal students in our country particularly in the North-Eastern region.

Hence the present paper is an attempt to investigate mental health status (by ascertaining self esteem, locus of control and emotional intelligence and depression) of tribal girl students of Tripura and to compare their mental health status with their non tribal counterparts. For the said purpose 200 girl students from both tribal and non tribal community were selected purposively from different Government degree colleges of

Agartala, the capital of Tripura. Data were collected by using Self Esteem Inventory, Locus of Control Scale, Emotional Intelligence Inventory and Beck Depressive Inventory. Four hypotheses were formulated and they were verified by using 't' test. Findings revealed that tribal girl students possessed low self esteem, external locus of control and low emotional intelligence in comparison to non tribal girl students. However the present research did not explore any significant difference among tribal and non tribal girl students in regard to their feeling of depression.

Finally the paper suggests some measures for fostering positive mental health among the tribal girls and hence empowering them so that they can gain knowledge, skills and attitude needed to cope with the changing world and circumstances and thus make able them take very active role in the overall development of tribal community.

Keywords

Mental Health, Self-esteem, Locus of Control, Emotional Intelligence, Depression.

Introducation

Mental health is an integral part of health. Mental health is more than the absence of mental illness and it is intimately connected with physical health and behaviour. According to World Health Organisation mental health is a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community (WHO, 2001). In this positive sense, mental health is the foundation for well-being and effective functioning for an individual and for a community. Neither mental nor

physical health can exist alone. Mental, physical and social functioning are interdependent. There are various indicators (like self esteem, emotional control, locus of control, depression etc) which help us to ascertain the mental health status of an individual. Among the various mental health variables 'self esteem' is very important for overall health and wellbeing of a person.

The term self-esteem comes from a Greek word meaning "reverence for self." The "self" part of self-esteem pertains to the values, beliefs and attitudes that we hold about ourselves. The "esteem" part of self-esteem describes the value and worth that one gives oneself. Simplistically self-esteem is the acceptance of ourselves for who and what we are at any given time in our lives. Hence an individual's self esteem is "how much he likes, accepts, and respects himself overall as a person". Self-esteem is the product of two internal assessments or judgments, the global judgment and one`s self-worth. The key to self-esteem is that the amount of discrepancy between what a person desires and what that person believes he/she has achieved and the overall sense of support that person feels from people around him/her (Rosenberg, 1965). Self esteem plays a crucial part in our consciousness, in our personality concept and in our organism. Thus it is some kind of core in our being. Each behaviour of an individual, simple or complex is influenced by how he perceives himself, if an individual feels he is accepted socially he will act friendly and cooperatively. Students' self-esteem is influenced by many factors (Osborne, 1997). Parents, teachers, co-workers, friends, fellow classmates, and the environment are constantly influencing self-esteem.

Many studies indicate that high self-esteem has many positive effects and benefits, especially among college students. Students who feel positive about themselves have fewer sleepless nights, succumb less easily to pressures of conformity by peers, are less likely to use drugs and alcohol, are more persistent at difficult tasks, are happier and more sociable, and have the tend to perform better academically. On the other hand, college students with a low self-esteem tend to be unhappy, less sociable, more likely to use drugs and alcohol, and are more vulnerable to depression, which are all correlated with lower academic achievement (Wiggins, 1994). If a person's self esteem is low he/ she often possess external locus of control.

The term 'Locus of control' refers to a person's belief about what causes the good or bad results in his life, either in general or in a specific area such as health or academics. The concept was developed by Julian B. Rotter in 1954, and has since become an important aspect of personality studies. Locus of control refers to the extent to which individuals believe that they can control events that affect them. Locus of control of an individual may be internal or external. Internal locus of control is the expectation that reinforcement is the result of one's own effort, ability, characteristics, or behavior; external locus of control is the expectation that reinforcement is the result of chance, fate, luck, or powerful others. Those with a high internal locus of control have better control of their behavior, tend to exhibit more political behaviors, and are more likely to attempt to influence other people. They are more active in seeking information and knowledge concerning their situation, more likely to have good study habits & positive academic attitude (Lefcourt, 1966). On the other hand an individual with external locus of control, attributes his/her success to luck or fate. Adults with an external locus of control tend to blame outside circumstances for their mistake and credit their success to luck rather than to their own efforts. They are readily influenced by the opinions of others & more likely to pay attention to the status of the opinion holder.

Like self-esteem and locus of control another important mental health variable is emotional intelligence. Emotional Intelligence is a dynamic construct influenced by diverse biological, psychological, and social factors. Emotional Intelligence can be described as the ability to perceive, recognize and understand the feelings of oneself and that of others. It is also referred to the capacity to use the information in directing one's thoughts and actions so that one lives effectively (Le Roux and De Klerk 2003). Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer coined the term 'Emotional Intelligence' in 1990 describing it as "a form of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action". Salovey and Mayer proposed a model that identified four different factors of emotional intelligence: the perception of emotion, the ability reason using emotions, the ability to understand emotion and the ability to manage emotions.

Importance of Emotional Intelligence is increasingly being recognized across various professions. Managing emotions in social contexts are clearly important for success in a variety of interpersonal; as well as career-related domains. According to much recent academic work, a good deal or our

successes and failures in life are not attributed to our cognitive abilities as measured by tests of IQ, but rather are attributable to our abilities to form and maintain social relationships, portray ourselves positively, and maintain how others perceive us (Richburg, 2002). Many studies showed gender differences in emotional intelligence. Petrides (2000) indicated that females scored higher than males on the social skills factor of measured traits of emotional intelligence. Brackett (2003) studied emotional intelligence and its relation to every day behaviour among college students and found that women scored higher than men. If an individual has low level of emotional intelligence he/ she will be more prone to develop anxiety and depression as many studies showed that emotional intelligence is a very important contributor of psychological adjustment.

The term depression is used very often in our day to day conversations to describe a normal downswing of mood. Everyone become a little depressed from time to time, but sometimes the depth of depression outweighs a person's ability to cope. In contrast to the normal emotional experiences of sadness, loss or passing mood states, clinical depression is persistent and can interfere significantly with an individual's ability to function. There are varying degrees of depression. Some mild, some quite severe and debilitating. The most severe of all is the degree of depression, which leaves the sufferer feeling alone, lost, and without hope for long periods of time culminating in suicide...the only way out the sufferer can see. Many studied indicated that women are more prone to depression than man (Wilhelm & Roy, 2003; Ge & Conger, 2003).

Literatures indicate that a number of studies have been carried out in India to examine all the mental health variables

however in Tripura no such attempts have been made to study the self- esteem, locus of control, emotional intelligence and depression among tribal girl students. Therefore the purpose of the study was to

i) investigate mental health status (by ascertaining self-esteem, locus of control, emotional intelligence and depression) of tribal girl students and to compare their mental health status with their non tribal counterparts.

ii) suggest some measures for fostering positive mental health among the tribal girls.

Hypotheses: In the present research four hypotheses were formulated. These are:

i) Self-esteem of the tribal and non tribal girl students would differ significantly irrespective of age or course of study.

ii) Locus of control of the tribal and non tribal girl students would differ significantly irrespective of age or course of study.

iii) Level of emotional intelligence of the tribal and non tribal girl students would differ significantly irrespective of age or course of study.

iv) Level of depression of the tribal and non tribal girl students would differ significantly irrespective of age or course of study.

Research Methodology

Sample

A group of 200 girl college students (19-22 years) were selected following purposive sampling technique from different Govt. colleges of Agartala. Among them 100 were tribal girl students and the rests were non tribal girl students. They were matched in terms of age and education. All of them be-

longed to middle socio economic class.

Tools: In the present study four research tools were used to measure the four mental health variables namely self-esteem, locus of control, emotional intelligence and depression

Self Esteem Inventory: It is developed by M.S. Prasad and G. P.Thakur in 1989. The inventory has two parts. Part one measures personally perceived self esteem and part two measures socially perceived self esteem. It consists of 30 items of which 17 items are socially desirable and 13 items are socially undesirable. However the very same items (30 items) measure both the self esteem of an individual although instructions to the subject differ in both the cases. There are 7 possible response to each item/statement. The maximum score of each part of this inventory is 210 and minimum score is 30. Here low score indicates poor self-esteem while high score indicates high self-esteem. The split-half reliability coefficient of both the sets of inventory is .82 and .78 for personally perceived and socially perceived self esteem respectively. The validity coefficient of the inventory is .84. For the purpose of the present study Bengali adapted version of this inventory was used.

Locus of Control Scale: It is developed by J. B. Rotter (1966). This scale consists of 29 items. Among those 6 items are filler items. The maximum score of the scale is 23. Here high scores indicate external locus of control and low score indicate internal locus of control of this subject. For the purpose of the present study Bengali adapted version of this inventory was used.

Emotional Intelligence Inventory: It was developed by S.K Mangal and Mrs. Shubra Mangal (2004). This is a self-administrating inventory having a very simple scoring process, as one mark for presence of emotional intelligence and zero mark for its absence. The possible range of score on this inventory is 0 to 100. The higher score in the test indicates the higher level of emotional intelligence and low score reveals low emotional intelligence.

Beck Depression Inventory (BDI): It isdeveloped by Beck et al, (1961) for ascertaining the depression level of the subjects. There are 21 items in this inventory. The score in this inventory ranges from 0-63. Low score in this inventory denotes low level of depression while high score indicates high level of depression. In the present study Bengali adapted version of this inventory was used.

Data Collection and Analysis:

Objectives of the study were properly briefed to all the study subjects and then the subjects who were willing to participate in the study were covered in the study. For all the subjects self administration method was employed.

Data collected from the subjects were checked and edited so that any gap or confusion identified at the preliminary stage could be clarified,henceforth. The filled in data sheets were subjected to in-house through editing and scrutiny. Finally, in case of quantitative data descriptive statistics like measures of Central Tendency and dispersions were carried out and then 't'-test was applied for verification of the research hypotheses.

Results and Discussion

So far as Self-esteem of the tribal and non tribal girl students is concerned the findings revealed that self-esteem of the tribal and non-tribal college students differed significantly

(P<.01) at 0.01 level of significance.Therefore, the first hypothesis i.e., 'Self-esteem of the tribal and non-tribal girl students would differ significantly irrespective of age or course of study' has been accepted. Hence it can be stated that tribal girl students possessed low self-esteem in comparison to their non-tribal counterparts (Table 1). This could be because of the distinctive lifestyle or socio-cultural characteristics of the nomadic society. The social isolation, lower socio-economic status and educational backwardness may be some of the factors accounting for lower self esteem of the tribal students as these conditions do not provide stimulating environment to them to develop positive self image in them.

Table 1: Comparison of Tribal and Non-tribal Girl College Students in Regard to Their Self Esteem

Sample Group	Number	Mean	S.D.	't' Value	Level of Significance
Tribal Students	100	129.98	15.58	-3.31	P<0. 01
Non-tribal Students	100	136.83	13.69		

Table 2 showed that the mean and SD scores of tribal girl students were 12.06 and 2.75 and on the other hand the mean and SD scores of non-tribal girl students were 10.23 and 3.91 respectively. The 't' value is 3.81 which is significant at 0.01 level of significance. Therefore the second hypothesis i.e., 'Locus of control of the tribal and non-tribal girl students would differ significantly irrespective of age or course of study' has been accepted. This further indicated that tribal students have external locus of control whereas non tribal girl students have internal locus of control. Studies showed that people with an

external locus of control tend to be more stressed, more anxious and prone to clinical depression (Elizabeth, 2007; Maltby, Day & Macaskill, 2007).

Table 2: Comparison of Tribal and Non-Tribal Girl Students in Regard to Their Locus of Control

Sample Group	Number	Mean	S.D.	't' Value	Level of Significance
Tribal Students	100	12.06	2.75	3.81	P<0. 01
Non-tribal Students	100	10.23	3.91		

Emotional intelligence helps individuals to achieve the life quality that will make them successful and content by guiding the actions of individuals. In this sense, the studies focused on measurement of emotional intelligence level have been increasing day by day.The findings of the present study indicated that the level of emotional intelligence among tribal students is comparatively low and they differed significantly with their non-tribal counterparts in this mental health variable (table 3). Bar-On (2006) inferred that high emotional intelligence helps individual to maintain a state of harmony in oneself and finally enabling one to be more self-confident in dealing with the challenges of day to day life.

Table 3: Comparison of Tribal and Non-Tribal Girl Students in Regard to Their Emotional Intelligence

Sample Group	Number	Mean	S.D.	't' Value	Level of Significance
Tribal Students	100	41.8	5.92	-4.22	P<0. 01
Non-tribal Students	100	45.05	4.86		

Community-wise comparison among girl students regarding their feeling of depression revealed a non-significant difference (P>0.05) between tribal and non tribal students indicating equal levels of depression among them. However from the mean score it can be said that tribal students are more depressed than their counterparts (Table 4). Kundu (1984) stated that lack of education and deprivation that the tribes face due to poverty may result in frustration both in personal as well as social relationships thereby resulting in poor self concept and low self-esteem. It is found that low level of self esteem leads to psychological problems like depression, social anxiety, loneliness, alienation (Leary, 2004).

Table 4: Comparison of Tribal and Non Tribal Girl Students in Regard to Their Feeling of Depression

Sample Group	Number	Mean	S.D.	't' Value	Level of Significance
Tribal Students	100	17.09	5.28	1.01	P>0. 05
Non-tribal Students	100	16.12	7.97		

Conclusion: So finally it can be concluded that tribal girl students possessed low self esteem, external locus of control and low emotional intelligence in comparison to non tribal girl students. However the present research did not explore any significant difference among tribal and non tribal girl students in regard to their feeling of depression.

On the basis of the findings some measures have been suggested for fostering positive mental health among the tribal girls and hence empowering them so that they can gain knowledge, skills and attitude needed to cope with the changing world

and circumstances and thus able take very active role in the overall development of tribal community.

a) There should be at least one Psychologist/ Counsellor in each and every school / college particularly in the rural schools as the problems of superstition and stigma is more prevalent in rural areas.

b) Counselleing services should be available in every institution so that whenever any student faces any psychological crisis he/she can get help from an experienced psychologist.

c) Parental counselling is also necessary so that they can understand the need, interest, etc of their wards.

d) More awareness programmes should be organized among the general population particularly among the tribal population so that they can understand the importance of mental health like physical health.

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Transforming the Power of Tribal Women in Tripura Thorugh Selg Help Gropus : A Critical Foucus

Dr. Bimal Kishore Acharya

Women representing more than 50 percent of total population of the country constitute the most important target group in the context of present day developmental planning. The policy makers worldwide have shifted their focus on empowerment of women from merely development of women. Women are the back bone of the society. They need to be treated with respect and at par with men. Empowerment is not given women power, rather letting the power out, as women have already power. Thus empowerment is to be achieved through transformation of power.

Transformation does not mean to give power to dominate others or to use power to establish the superiority of women over others. Transformation of power to women does not mean ignoring men, but the truth is both the gender desperately need to be equally empowered. Transformation of power involves enhancing the skill and ability of women and improving wealth of their knowledge and information. Transformation of power means to assert women in various aspect of life, both in and out side home.Transfotmation involves raising women's bargaining power and also their contribution to the economy by exercising their productive role. Transformation

of power endorses women's sense of work, the right to determine choices, the power to control their own life within and outside home and their ability to influence the direction of social changes.

Transformation of power could be occurred in six different levels viz: family, group, organization, village, community and society. This could be made through the changes in women's ability and social interaction, changes in women's access to and control over resources, changes in women's labour pattern and changes in women's control over decision making.

Concept of Self Help Group (SHG)

Self Help Group is now most important tool in the hands of women for transformation of power.SHG is a small group of rural poor women voluntarily associated for improvement of the economic development of the members.SHG is two decades old and now evolved as a movement.SHG is based on the principle of "by the women, of the women and for the women."

Originated in Bangladesh as a micro credit system, the SHGs have got momentum in India as their Indian version in a modified way. In 1992 NABARD started promoting SHGs on a large scale .The movement of SHGs got further boost in 1993 with permission of RBI to open saving bank account in the name of SHGs.

Need for Self Help Group

In recent years SHGs have become a significant movement in India. All for all is the principle behind the concept of SHGs.The role and important of SHGs in a country like India in creating wealth in the hands of poor women is praise worthy. Following factors are responsible for rapid

growth SHGs in India.

i. Inculcating the habit of saving and investment

ii Mobilizing resources of individual members for their collective economic development

iii. Identifying problems, analyzing and finding solution in the group

iv. Accessing to various promotional assistances

v. Acting as a platform for socio economic development of rural poor women

Vi.Developing team spirit

The Tripura Perspective

In the small hilly north-eastern state of Tripura women constitute 49 percent of total population. population of different tribes of Tripura account for 31.8 percent of total population of which 49.5 percent are women.(census-2011) No economy can be developed without the development of women. As a sizeable population are tribal so development, empowerment and transformation of power of tribal women are the only alternatives for development of state economy in general and tribal economy in particular.

There has been a paradigm shift of tribal economy over the years. In recent years SHGs have emerged and acting in right direction in transforming power of tribal women through economic development in rural areas of Tripura

Objective of the study

The broad objective of the study is to analyse the role and impact of SHGs in transforming the power of tribal women in Tripura.

The specific objectives of the study are:

∞ To examine the socio-economic status of tribal women

respondents.

∞ To analyse the role of SHGs in transformation of power of tribal women in Tripura.

∞ To assess the socio-economic benefits derived by tribal women after joining SHGs.

∞ To suggest some strategic interventions to improve the functioning of SHGs.

Methodology

The present study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data is collected through a structured schedule administered among 100 members of 10 sample SHGs selected from three districts of Tripura viz: West Tripura(3),Sepahijala(4) and Gomati(3). Records of SHGs, publication of government offices, various journals, books, periodicals and websites form the secondary source.

Results and Discussion

This part of the study is devoted for analysis and interpretation of the responses so gathered through the questionnaire. The analysis is made in two dimensions.

∞ (i) Analysis of demographic features of the sample respondents

∞ (ii) Analysis of responses on transformation of power of tribal women through SHGs.

Analysis of Data

T-1 Age and Education Level of Sample Respondents

Age	Frequency in%	Education Level	Frequency in%
Less than 20	05	Illiterate	03
20-30	33	Literate	21
30-40	35	Primary	29
40-50	17	Secondary	37
Above 50	10	Higher Secondary	08
		Degree	02
Total	100	Total	100

It is pertinent from the Table-1 that 35% sample respondents are in the age group of 3040 followed by 33% in the age group of 20-30. It is also seen that only five percent respondents are in the age group of less than 20 while another 10% are above age group of 50.The representation of maximum respondents in the age group of 30-40 may be due to more presser on them from family to support with their income by joining in SHGs.

T-2 Marital Status and No. Of Dependents of Sample Respondents

Marital Status	Frequency in %	Family Structure	Frequency in %	No. of dependents	Frequency in%
Married	91	Nucleus	72	1-2	54
Unmarried	03	Joint	28	3-4	31
Divorcee	02			5-6	10
Widow	04			More than 6	05
Total	100	Total	100	Total	100

An analysis of social status of the sample respondents reveals that maximum number of tribal women respondents (91%) are married where as only three percents are unmarried. It is also seen that some divorcee (02%) and widow (04%) tribal women join in SHGs to sustain their lively hood. It is a very positive sign so far as transformation of power of tribal women is concerned.

T- 3 Occupation of Respondents

Occupation	Frequency in%	Earning Position	Frequency in%
Agriculture Labour	22	Lone earning member	21
Daily Labour	28	Supportive to family income	79
Small Business	12		
House wives	38		
Total	100	Total	100

So far as occupation of tribal women respondents are concerned 38% are housewives followed by 28% daily labourers. Again 22% respondents are agriculture labourers where 12% respondents engaged in small business activities. So it is established that SHGs provide a good opportunity for self development and transformation of power for marginalised group of tribal women like daily labourers and agriculture labourers.Housevives also get a scope to utilise their time in an effective and prbductive way.

T-4 Reasons for Joining SHGs

Reasons	in %
Getting Loan	42
Promoting savings	33
Social Recognition	25
Total	100

What are the reasons for joining SHGs? This question was asked to the respondents. The analysis reveals that 42% respondents join SHGs to get loan whereas 33% respondents join to promote their savings. Another 25% respondents opined that they join the SHGs to get social recognition. Thus it is proved that tribal women join SHGs with different motives. But the overall intention is to associate themselves in various socio-economic activities.

T-5 Income Level of Respondents

Income Level(Rs)	%(before joining SHG	%(after joining SHG)
Less than1000	23	09
1000-2000	20	13
2000-3000	18	15
3000-4000	14	18
4000-5000	15	23
5000 & Above	10	22

Table-5 shows the level of income of sample tribal women respondents before and after joining SHGs.It is observed that the level of income of sample respondents has increased after joining SHGs as only 10% respondents has an income of more than 5,000 before joining SHGs which has been increased to 22% after joining SHGs.Similarily the percentage of respondents with low income level has decreased from 23% to 09% after joining SHGS.Thus SHGs are responsible in increasing income level of tribal women members enabling them for transformation of power.

T-6 Expenditure Level of Respondents

Expenditure Level(Rs)	% before joining SHG	% after joining SHG
Less than1000	26	20
1000-2000	33	25
2000-3000	23	30
3000-4000	13	17
Above 4000	05	08
Total	100	100

Like income, the expenditure level of sample tribal women respondents has also been increased after joining SHGs. The data support the fact that the percentage of sample respondents with average expenditure of less than Rs. 1000 has decreased from 26% to 20%.Similrily the percentage of respondents with average expenditure of Rs. 2000-3000 has increased from 23 to 30 and the percentage of respondents with the average expenditure of Rs 3000-4000 has increased from 13 to17. This implies that the purchasing power of sample tribal women respondents has increased after joining SHGs.

T-7 Saving pattern of Respondents

Saving in Rs	% before joining SHG	% after joining SHG
Less than200	40	24
200-400	28	32
400-600	22	29
Above 600	10	15
Total	100	100

Table-7 shows the saving pattern of sample tribal women SHG members. It is evident from the data that the saving pattern also follows the path of income and expenditure. It is observe that savings of sample respondents has also gone up after joining SHGs. Analysis of data shows that only 10 percent sample respondents were able to save more than Rs.600 where as this number increases to 15 percentage after joining SHGs.Similarily the percentage of respondents with saving level of Rs.200-400 and Rs. 400-600 has also increased from 28% to 32% and 22% to 29% respectively.

T-8 Responses on Saving

Feelings	Responses in %(multiple)
Feel Good	83
Establishing Identity in Periphery	66
Sense of Security	87

Tribal women have developed saving habit after joining SHGs.How do they feel when their savings increased? An analysis of the responses so gathered reveals that 83% sample respondents feel good and another 66% feel satisfactory as their identity has been established in the periphery. Again 87% respondents feel a sense of security as their savings increased. This contributes immensely towards transformation of power of tribal women members of SHGs.

T-9 Responses on Social Mobility

Mobility And Social Interactions	Before Joining SHG (Responses in %)	After Joining SHG (Responses in %)
Participated in Public Functions	30	83
Travelling new Places	21	97
New Interaction with Officials and Bank Staff	07	93
Experience of Attending Meeting	03	100

One of the main process that could lead to women's transformation of power is changes in women's mobility and social interaction. The analysis revealed that tribal women have become more mobile and began to have new interactions with a range of officials. In all the data it is show that 83% tribal women members have participated in public function after joining SHGs.It is also seen that 97% respondents have visited new places and travelled longer distances after joining SHGs where as this figure stands at only 21% before joining SHGs. Similarly 93% respondents experienced new interactions with officials and bank staff. A very interesting finding of the study is that all the tribal women members of SHGs experienced attending of meeting which is 97% increasing before joining SHGs.

T-10 Responses on Transformation of Power

Types of Decisions	Yes(%)	No(%)	Total(%)
Purchase of Assets	62	38	100
Purchase of Domestic Animals	86	14	100
Purchase of Jewellery	96	04	100
Purchase of Home Appliances	97	03	100
Purchase of Clothes	94	06	100
Taking a Loan	65	35	100
Repayment of Loan	59	41	100
Saving and Investment	63	37	100
Education of Children	73	27	100
Construction and Renovation of House	68	32	100

A number of statements were put forth before the tribal women members of SHGs to built their opinions on various decision making process. The data is analysed to know the changes in women's control over decision making. The study reveals that in most of the decision making process the opin-

ions of the sample respondents are considered. This is a positive impact of SHGs.It is seen that opinions of women members are highly considered in case of purchase of jewellery(96%),purchase of home appliances(97%) and purchase of clothes(94%).Besides, in some other major decision making process the opinion of sample respondents are sought and considered like purchase and sale of fixed assets(62%),purchase of domestic animals(86%),taking loan (65%),education of children(73%) and construction of house(68%).The analysis indicate that tribal women members are given much freedom in taking important decisions of their family.

T-11 Benefits derived from SHG

Benefits Derived	Responses in %(multiple)
Creating wealth of their own	79
Knowledge about Banking System	73
Increasing Status in the Family	59
Enhancing Self Confidence	39
More Organised than Before	42
Able to know Fellow members Problems	71
No need to take Loan From Money Lenders	76
Knowledge About Government Schemes	62
Developing Communication Skill	67
Freedom in Saving and Spending	75
Increased Health care awareness	64
Less Dependent	78
Contribute to the Economy	86
Best Utilisation of Idle Time	81
Capacity Building and skill Development	70

What benefits are derived by tribal women members after joining SHGs? An open ended question was asked to the sample respondents in this respect. The analysis of responses reveals that most of the respondents are now have knowledge of banking system(73%), many of them are now less dependent on their male counterparts(78%),most of respondents are now enjoy freedom regarding saving and spending(75%). Besides, after joining SHGs many tribal women are able to create wealth of their own (79%), can best utilise their idle time (81%), increase their capacity building power and skill development (70%). The data also explain that71% respondents are now able to understand the problems of fellow members, 64% respondents are aware of better health care and 67% have developed their communication skill. Thus it is evident that SHGs have contributed immensely for overall empowerment, development and transformation of power of tribal women members.

Suggestions

Self Help Group is a noble concept for providing micro credit and rural development. Women are particularly benefitted from the scheme. Joining of more and more tribal women in SHGs is a symbol of social inclusion. Still SHGs have to go a long way for their sustainable survival. So some suggestive measures are advocated here for the expansion and efficient working of SHGs.

- Adult and continuing education programmes should be conducted for illiterate tribal women members.
- Vocational and skill development programmes should be conducted.
- Entrepreneurship Development Programmes

(EDPs) on different topics should be conducted in order to increase the entrepreneurial ability of tribal women.

- Emphasis should be given on development of handloom and handicrafts of Tripura through SHGs.
- More and more economic activities should be undertaken by the SHGs instead of providing only loan to the members.

Conclusion

Tribal women are basically shy and introvert. But they have enough potentialities to be exploited. Most of them are skilled weavers. They are capable enough to play both productive and re-productive role in the society. Many of them could not able to contribute to the society and economy due to lack of opportunity. The origin and development of Self Help Groups (SHGs) provide this opportunity to the women. Many SHGs are formed by tribal women only. With this they are engaged in various productive and economic activities. Their leisure time is now best utilised which might have wasted otherwise. With economic empowerment there is a transformation of power of tribal women through SHGs. Most of them are now able to participate in various decision making process and also able to contribute economically to their family and society. They are now also able to communicate with officials and team mates. Their leadership quality has also developed. Most of them are now financialy literate.SHGs are acting in right direction so far as transformation of power of tribal women are concerned.

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Tribal Women Empowerment : Scopes in Traditional Cultural and system in Tripura

Dr. Jyotirmoy Sharma

Tribes are one of the most primitive social groups of the world. The base of over-all well-being of the human race is consciousness and no doubt the women have the power to steer the process of well- being. Keeping this view in mind, the objective of this paper is to highlight the rich provisions existing in the rural surroundings of Tripura, cultivation of which may lead the rural tribal women to the horizon of economic development. Tripura is a land of natural wealth. Its forest is rich in the variety of resources and the tribal women of Tripura are basically having the skill of producing different items like traditional dresses, ornaments, home decors etc. out of the local resources. The basic need of this time is to enhance their scope with appropriate techniques so that the tribal women of rural areas can empower themselves as well as strengthening the traditional economy.

Key words

Well being, Rural surroundings, Economic development, Traditional culture, Women empowerment.

Introduction

'komal hain kamjor nahin, shaktidata ye nari hain'- I would like to start my presentation with these lines because empow-

erment needs that power of ability within, which makes one empowered and women have this power. One of the most effective factors for empowerment is economic development. So, to enhance the scopes for empowerment of the tribal women of Tripura, the provisions for attaining this goal are to be identified.

As a sincere search for some additional views with those are already exists, the objective of this paper is:

Objective

1) To have glances on the natural resources of Tripura, which are easily accessible to the tribal women.

2) To find out some appropriate techniques, which can be the instruments for achieving at a desired economic development.

3) To search for the ways to conserve the rich culture of house hold economy of the tribes of Tripura in the recent hi-tech-era.

Observation

The tribes, all over the world are well-known for their distinctive character of culture and heritage. The tribes are basically efficient to live successfully within the realm of their own area of geographical structure. This is due to the keen relation with the flora and fauna of the nature, which they respect very much. They know how to nurture the nature to get the best out of it. The tribes of Tripura are not an exception. Naturally Tripura is gifted with the variety of natural wealth. This state is having noticeably moderate climate also. Though very recently the state climate is also facing some effects of environmental crisis as a part of global situation, still it can be proud of its natural richness. Such a support of environmental balance helps

to produce variety of natural resources. It is important to identify the items, which may be the best resources for the economic support, especially for the tribal women.

In this respect, mention may be made of bamboo cane, wood and some kinds of grasses. All of these materials are used to produce useful and attractive items for regular domestic use as well as for any decorative use. Next comes the scope of tea cultivation. The climate of Tripura is friendly for reasonably well production of tea leaf. This natural wealth is recognised for its good quality of taste and smell. We also can take in account the field of weaving mainly done by the tribal women of our state. It has got a speciality for making winterwears, the raw material of which is cotton of local forest. One more point may be added here that, as there are sufficient food for domestic animals in the forest of Tripura, so animal husbandry may be one of the sources of earning of the tribal women.

Of course there are many other sources to be used effectively, but I have just wanted to concentrate my discussion on those, which may be effectively used by the tribal women more easily. In this particular sense also, there are other sources, but these are the broad areas of prospects I have mentioned in short as all of us know that there is a time constraint for all of us.

Now comes the second objective of my paper. It is true that there are plans and principles, aims and objectives, sanctioned and subsidies for the overall status development of the tribal women. Still there are lacking in achieving at the desired goal in this respect. In fact, the need for such a seminar suffices this fact. To get a financially stable women class, using

natural resources is not sufficient. It is more important to ensure the earning out of these resources. Price hike is a regular trend of this time. The products made out of those resources mentioned here are also very costly and sometimes go out of reach of the buyers. This situation creates a negative effect on the earning of the producers. To get rid of this common problem, some measures may be taken to produce the items and marketing the products more easily. The producers may get the transport facility for marketing with some special discounts so that they can travel to the urban areas for marketing of the products, can take parts in the trade and industry fairs. Trade fairs may be arranged in rural areas so that transportation cost can be avoided to some extent. To encourage the young generation in these traditional activities some training programmes with stipend facilities may be arranged. Rural areas are to be provided with sufficient supply of electricity so that the daily necessities can be met up. In short, to avail the rural resources successfully for a developed life status and to keep the rural life rural but advanced, some urban facilities are to be sent to rural areas. It is to be kept in mind that urbanisation not necessary mean deforestation for modern construction and abolishing the natural resources. All the tribal women residing in rural areas cannot be able to make scopes to reside in urban areas for availing the means for empowerment and this is not a solution too. So, the policy makers and wings of administration may take measures for the employment generation programme in the local areas of those women who are all ready skilful in some profitable areas.

In this way, the process of conserving the community based economy of the state may be maintained. If the tribal

women get opportunities of producing items as a source of financial stability and at the same time, get the scopes for developing their skill also, they may fill interested to be involved in nourishing their basic culture and heritage. For this purpose, some advanced skills, which are time saving and money making, may be added to the existing pattern of works. Dr. Chitrasen Pasayat mentioned in his book 'Development of Tribal Women-Problems and Potential' that, " The structure of tribal society is slowly is under going a process of change due to increasing opportunities for education, greater geographical mobility, emergence of new economic patterns and impact of urbanisation, industrialisation, westernisation, politicisation and so on." These changes are inevitable but practically not always positive for the traditional culture of any place and time. For example, we cannot deny the necessity and utility of urban facilities, but we also cannot deny the necessity and utility of original serenity of rural environment. It is not easy to collaborate these two meaningfully. But the emphasis is to be given on preserving the feeling for the national culture and system of the aboriginal group. The recent trend of being habituated with technological system in daily life is snatching out the urge for hearing the sounds of soil. Development never means to forget the comparatively less developed past, the base; development, in real sense, is a gradual upgradation of the past. It will be successful if done along with the original ingredients of the development process.

Conclusion: It is fact that, the substantial contribution towards family's subsistence determines the level of empowerment. Women are always supporting their family for its subsistence. But household work, even though money saving, are

not considered as substantial to their family's economy. So women are to establish their contribution to family in both ways. For this, financial stability is an important factor. Then the sense of consciousness of their ability will come and process of empowerment will proceed steps ahead.

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The Queens of Tripura : Women Beyond The Epoch

P. G.T. Ratbabali Ray Sengupta

Indian civilization from time immemorial is a perfect blending of divergent cultural trends. Society, evolved from this phenomenon will be a strong integrated society. Tripura, one of the states of North East India is also not in exception as it experienced the prevalence of two different traditions, ran parallel in the region. Indeed, archaeological remains in the form of sculpture, architecture and coins reveal the fact that Tripura was a part of the dynastic evolution of contemporary South Eastern Bengal (Samatata and Harikela) in early medieval period. This region as a distinct geo-political entity sometimes around the fourteenth century under the Hinduised Manikya rulers who are supposed to belong to Bodo group. Dr Suniti Kumar Chatterjee classified the tribal people of Tripura under the Indo-Mongoloids or Kiratas[1]. Political consolidation was initiated along with the dimensional change in the society, economy and culture.

Besides, the tribal people of this region have their own ethnic culture, entirely distinguishable from classical standardise culture, they come inside the pale of Bramhanical Hinduism and adopted the conventional culture of their neighbours rapidly. The early Manikya rulers Dharma Manikya,

Ratna Manikya were the patron of Bramhnanical religion[2]. It is generally believed that during the reign of Ratna Manikya a large number of people from Bengal migrated in this region and settled here[3]. Important, as this phenomenon is, it encouraged the mutual exchange of ideas which enriched the society economy as well as every aspect of life.

The women of the society are invariably the zealous career of the social and cultural traditions. Status of a woman in a society signifies the condition of the society. More powerful women imply more powerful society. Similarly, following this apprehension the status and position of the women of the tribal society in the early period of Tripura has to be appreciated. The tribes of Tripura are divided into nineteen groups and few sub groups which have their own distinct culture. However the society is characterised by the osmosis of these separate traditions. Generally the societies of these groups are patriarchal. Accordingly Romila Thapar truly observes that,"Within the confines of a patriarchal system the status of women veered, according to occasion, from being relatively free to being restricted". Scarcity of relevant sources is an obstacle to produce any definite fact about the common women of tribal society. Hence they enjoy a higher status than their non-tribal counterparts. Captain Lewin observes that the men of tribal community are monogamists[4]. According to W.W.Hunter adultery is very uncommon. Child marriage is not in practice. Bride price is also paid for them[5]. Widow remarriage is also in vogue.

But the existence of 'Sati' system in the tribal society stands in a sharp contrast against their status. According to Rajmala it is an age old custom, though the early reference to 'Sati' in Rajmala was in the sixteenth century when kamalaDevi,

the queen of Dhanya Manikya (c.1490-1520 C.E.) immolated herself at the pyre of her husband. The Rajmala also mentions that the custom was prevailed in the tribal people also.In fact the concrete evidence of 'Sati' among the tribes ofTripura is found only in the nineteenth century during the reign of Maharaja Birchandra Manikya (1862-1896). The Jamatias were more prone to this custom. Evidently this might be the negative effect of Hinduisation.

All these comments are not sufficient to frame out the real position of a common tribal woman in the early period of the history of Tripura. However, in this context the status and the position of the queens and ladies of royal family are worth to be mentioned. The queens of the Manikya family are the true representatives of the rich culture and society of Tripura. They adopted the contemporary trend which was resulted from the blending of the two different cultural processes. An attempt is being made in this paper to understand the degree of this mingling and the influence of this process on the self empowered queens of the royal family along with their contribution for uplifting the status of the tribal women in the present society.

As mentioned above, sources, speak about the royal ladies are very meagre. Even the principal literary source of Manikya dynasty, Rajmala also referred marginally. Maha Manikya or Chengthung-fa, presumably the first historical king of the Manikya dynasty of Tripura has been referred in Rajmala as a conqueror who fought against the ruler of Gaud of Bengal. According to Rajmala , the queen of Maha Manikya, Mahadevi (this name is assumed by some of the scholars) encouraged the soldiers in the battle and she herself participated in that

battle7. The historical authenticity of this fact is not definite but it reveals the courage of a tribal woman of medieval period. Again Kamalavati, the queen of Dhanya Manikya inspired the king for village development. She was also a patron of literature and language. Similarly Gunavati, the queen of Govinda Manikya was also a benevolent lady with having keen interest to village-development. Queen Jahnavi Devi wife of the king Krishna Manikya took the charge of administration in1783 after the death of her husband to avoid the civil war. She ruled for two years with efficiency. Notwithstanding the queens were also proficient for making of handicraft item. In this context the reference of the queen of Maharaj Ramganga Manikya can be mentioned who was efficient in embroidery. Apart from these Anangamohini Devi, Mrinalini Devi Kumudini Devi daughters of Maharaj Birchandra Manikya were qualified by poetic competency. Anangamohini Devi was a well known poet of that period. Admittedly the cultural environment of the royal palace was favourable for them. The queens and the royal ladies of Tripura absorbed the advanced culture, initiated by the rulers and enriched themselves. They are all exceptional by the virtue of their own.

Hence the most remarkable queen of Tripura, stands in sheer exception is queen Tulsibati, wife of the king Radhakishore Manikya and the legendary personality of Tripura. Born in the early part of 1860 C.E. in a very poor family at Nolgoria village in Ranirbazar, she was a woman of such a progressive thinking which truly crossed the limit of age. It is believed that she was illiterate but left her impression on the women education of Tripura. She has a very sensitive mind to feel the necessity of women education and initiated a girl's

school in Tripura. Initially the school was started inside the royal palace. Later on, it has shifted to the place where it is located at present[8]. The school was a free school, funded by the income from her personal estate. Women illiteracy, girl child marriage, purdah system was prevalent at that period. The wall of women illiteracy of Tripura has trembled. Notwithstanding, other social reforms of the queen are worth to be mentioned. With her initiative a separate ward for women in Victoria Memorial Hospital of Agartala has been inaugurated. Again for the convenience of the habitats, staying far from Agartala she established a market which is now famous as Ranirbazar. Indeed, queen Tulsibati is an embodiment of self empowered woman of the society. The establishment of Maharani Tulsibati Balika Vidyalay is a milestone in women education as it has a far reaching impact on the society.

Education is the basic need of a society which was fulfilled. At present the women of this state are enjoying a high position in the every aspect of life. In politics, teaching, administration and in all fields they have participated in a number. The tribal women of this region are not outside the pale of this cultural development. Their advancement is evident from their presence in every sphere of life. This scenario would be impossible without education. They achieved a higher position in the field of education. Women's college of Agartala experienced three women principal from the tribal section. The tribal women are now taking the advantage of various governmental schemes and empowered themselves. They are taking the advantage of micro-entrepreneurship schemes to achieve economic self sufficiency. Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojona, the scheme implemented by District Rural Development

Agency has enabled the women to become self dependent by which the tribal women also enriched. Self Help groups have been formed by the tribal women which are developing day to day. All this achievements are now possible with proper education which is started by the effort of the queen.

The present paper can be concluded with the observation that the women education in Tripura has entered in a new era with the establishment of Maharani Tulsivati Balika Vidyalay. It paved the way of women education and empowered the tribal and non tribal women of the society. The tribal women of Tripura inherited courage, self sufficiency and co-operative attitude in them. The protest of Kumari, Madhuti, Rupasree against 'Titun' system signifies their self empowerment. Indeed, they are self reliant. Only they need some support which will enable them for further advancement.

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Empowerment of Tribal Women in North-East India : A Subaltern Study

Dr. Prasanta Chakraborty
&
Smti Somali Saha

'Subaltern' is a term which stands for the marginalized and signifies the oppressed sections of the society or to be more explicit the minority sections of the society who are subordinated to the activity of the ruling class. It is a broad category that attempts to characterize individuals whose voices and actions have been muted, drastically reinterpreted, lost, or consciously swept away. Implicit in the term are related questions of power, agency and representation. In different historical contexts, the subaltern has been understood as synonymous with women, children, colonial subjects, the poor, the illiterate, the proletariat or the religious or ethnic minority. Antonio Gramsci uses the term subaltern to describe "history told from below" in his work on cultural hegemony. Subaltern Studies have emerged as a powerful oppositional and critical history writing tool beginning in the early 1980s. Generally Subaltern Studies is an innovative project born out of an increasing disillusionment with the practice of history writing in general and Indian historiography in particular. It can be defined as the history of the marginalized communities, gender, races and groups written with local sources and from their perspectives. It focuses on local sites of resistance within the national free-

dom struggle in India, writings by Dalits who question the notion of a unified Indian society, the history of gender oppression, the atrocities and struggles of the Tribals and communal violence. The history of a region or nation, for the Subaltern historians, is not the history of industrialists, merchants and great statesmen, as projected in traditional histories. It is primarily the history of the common people, the lower classes, the Tribals and the women, whose lives and stories do not figure in mainstream history accept as audiences to the great acts of the dominant classes or groups.

By 'Subaltern' Spivak meant the oppressed subject. In one of her provocative essays, Can the Subaltern Speak? She worries about the agency of the Subaltern / oppressed to represent themselves. She argues that since the subaltern cannot speak for herself because the 'double bind' of colonialism and patriarchy silencing her, any intellectual project must seek to make visible the position of the marginalized. The Northeast part of India being a multiethnic and multicultural region has been plagued by ethnic clashes, territorial disputes, insurgency, unrest in different forms and above all lack of required development. The people of the Northeast India and specially the tribal population may be considered to be the subalterns so far as they are handled by the 'step motherly attitude' of the centre and mainstream India as well as by the heartland people. There seems to be a colonial approach towards this economically weaker section of the country. A situation continues to sustain where the relationship between the centre and the periphery is that of the exploiter and the exploited, the agency that subjugates and the one that is subjugated. Economic recourses and power remains concentrated at the centre, to the advantage of

which the periphery is subordinated. Besides, the regular influx of refugees from across the border has added to the financial and socio-cultural crisis of the indigenous people. The demographic change has a telling effect on the socio-cultural activities of these people. The adversities give birth to insurgency in this region. The centre too tried to make an easy solution - suppressing the terrorist movement through force. Deadly laws like AFSPA were promulgated in several parts of this region to curb insurgency instead of extending cooperation from the centre to solve the burning problems in this area. In such a situation, it is the women and children who were the most affected.

But a general impression about the women of this region is there that they enjoy greater freedom with respect to their mobility and the absence of certain practices when compared with their counterparts in other parts of the country. Therefore, unlike the Dalit women, they are not supposed to be subalterns in their communities. But a subaltern study in this article attempts to give a new dimension to this traditional concept showing that there is strong discrimination against women mainly in the light of tradition and customary practices even in the matrilineal societies of this region.

Some of the taboos among the Northeast India tribes referred to here would give a glimpse of the status of the women in their societies. The Zeliangrong Naga men believe that sleeping with one's wife before going hunting may bring bad luck to the whole group. The Zemei Naga males are forbidden to touch the meat of an animal killed by a woman, as this is below their dignity as men are only supposed to be brave and women to be docile. Among the Tangkhuls in Manipur there are taboos like

a woman should not yell in public, a woman should not climb over roofs, trees etc. Ill luck will fall upon a man if he walks below a woman's clothes line. Their oral traditions too 'reflect the broad spectrum of marginalisation of women in the society' (Chakraborty, 2008: 28). There are phrases and sayings among the tribes which indicate that women were not given the equal status with the male members. The saying that the wisdom of a woman does not extend beyond the bank of a river is the traditional approach towards Hmar women. The Mizos have sayings like a woman and old fence can be replaced any time. Just as the crab meat is not counted as meat, so also women's word is not counted as word. Dauntless wife and unthreatened creepers of the field are both unbearable.

Researches show that in the traditional Garo society, women are ridiculed with the saying that just as a goat is without teeth, so a woman lacks brain. The women of Mayon Nagas of Manipur are considered to have no principle as her clan changes into that of her husband's after her marriage. The Khasis in Meghalaya also had the sayings that if the hen crows, the world including the family will change for the worst. These sayings unmask the myth that enshrouds the status of the tribal women in her clan. This not only lowers their status but also underestimate their priceless contribution towards their family.

This study will show that most of the societies in north-east India are, in reality, patriarchal in nature under the coating of matrilineality. Men are considered superior to women and they dominate and exercise control over most of the resources. The impact of modernisation and globalisation has further strengthened the patriarchal nature of men in their society.

A close look at the Naga socio-cultural relations among their men and women will only corroborate the dominance of the men over their women. Traditionally, men are the only decision makers in both public and private matters and the women are only to carry out their decisions. The Naga society existed for centuries together on the strength of male members. The women were there contributing to the cult of heroism attributed to the male species. Women folk designed Ao-Naga shawl to inspire and reward the men of their heroic exploits. ' The socially constructed self of the woman in the past was so thoroughly subordinated to the male that in time she too accepted it as the definition of her ontological selfhood.'(Gill, 105) The scenery hardly changed even after the spread of Christianity in this region. As yet no woman has been offered the title of pastor in the Baptist churches. As an impact of modernisation, the boys were encouraged to go to school while the girls were mostly engaged in household chores. The advent of democracy and the conversion of Nagaland to a state have given a slight edge to the women over their previous status. Commenting on the status of Naga women in their society, Temsula Ao comments

'Despite appearances, Naga society is still very traditional in its outlook and one of the abiding truths of this society is the 'position' of woman in the public domain. - - - a woman's achievement is always prefaced by the preamble, 'even though only women, she has been able to do this', as if the achievement has come in spite of her being 'only a woman'. Truth be told, even today many women are not free from such a bias when they concede to male superiority out of deference to 'custom'. (ibid)

Apparently, the Naga women do not suffer from any abuses that regularly affect the women of other parts of the country. There are no dowry deaths as such, no physical abuse or mandatory wearing of burquas or becoming an exclusive property of their husbands. They are better than their counterparts in other parts of the country so far as their enjoying personal freedom with the advent of modernisation, things have tilted marginally in favour of Naga women as the old village politics and economy have become redundant in the new context. The Naga male society is unwilling to overhaul the age-old system which excludes Naga women from institutions of power. The only compromise the Naga men do is to induct their women in minor capacities in the newer institutions of power which the women accept satisfactorily as roads to empowering women. The Naga political leaders thus could boldly say that the Naga women should be content with what they are allotted in the society.

Things are no better for the Khasi women although their society is known all around to be matrilineal. It was believed that there was a time when women were preferred to be the custodians of their society as life was perilous for the Khasi men folk who died in large number while defending their people. With the changing of time, the existing pattern comes under a threat when the Khasi male expressed desire to revert to patriarchal society as regular war no longer exists. What were the responsibilities to share by the Khasi women in a matrilineal society? They were assigned the responsibility to look after children, to bring them up and make them responsible members of the society and instil in them a strong sense of commitment to their own clan and 'respect for the paternal clan'.

(Gill, 109) A cursory look at the lifestyle of the Khasi women gives one an impression that the society is matriarchal as women are found running shops, working as labourers, vendors etc. There are single mother, divorced women, remarried widows, women married twice or thrice who are accepted by their society without any question or raising of eye-brows. But beneath these apparent matriarchal hold, lies the dominance of patriarchy. True, the Khasi women can take decisions regarding their own lifestyle or that of her family but if the same clashes with the patriarchy, matriarchy has to be crucified. Men dictate the public life as women controls the policy decision in the home front. They are silence in their public life. Women themselves are aware of the dual stand of the society and of their men. Esther Syiem rightly observes,

Women have constantly stifled and sublimated their dreams of self -expression and articulation of their deepest secrets and fears. It is interesting that there has been no woman writer among the Khasis- for even within this matrilineal system it seems that the stimulant for self expression through the written word seems to have been denied to Khasi women. The general opinion is that Khasi women have power because they hold the financial reigns of the family. The notion of inheritance and of power has undergone serious valuation in a society that has- - - become greatly influenced by the West in terms of everyday realities. Social equations have been severely eroded by Christianity - - - . (Gill, 110)

Although women have the inheritance rights, they need consent from the male members including their brothers and uncles to execute their rights. Although a family in Khasi society yearns for a female child, a woman was preferred for her

capacity to nourish, feed and give birth to a baby bearing the same for a certain period of time. She has been treated as a supporting force of the family. As such, male members were neglected so far, which raised discontent among them forcing the Khasi community to revaluate the gender roles tilting in favour of female child. Further, things are changing keeping pace with the globalization. Khasi women are now taking part in all kinds of government and private jobs - from low paid agricultural works to the profession of a teacher, doctors etc. So they are exposed to new challenges in their daily life. S. the claim the Khasi society is matrilineal seems to be under threat.

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Role of Education in Empowring Tribal Women : A Study

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Abstract

Education enables women to fix themselves up in the society into which they have found themselves and it is too applicable to Tribal Women also. Education equips individuals with the ability that will enable them to explore the world, to manipulate for their survival and establish themselves. Potentials deposited in individuals are exposed through education so that individuals can acquire training and knowledge in a profession and education enables Tribal women to cultivate confidence, good habits and develop the right attitude to work and life as good citizens. Education is one of the most important means of empowering women with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence necessary to participate fully in the development process. Education provide opportunities to Tribal women to fulfill their needs. These needs comprise both essential learning tools and the basic learning content such as knowledge, skills, values and attitudes required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decision making and to continue learning. Empowering Tribal women

through education will contribute a lot to national development. Stepping into empowerment is a far distant dream for Tribal women. The educational status of Tribal women is very low compared to their male counterparts. Education of women is conceived as one of the most powerful weapons in the development of a nation. Empowerment of Tribal women is a challenging issue in the present scenario. Without empowerment of Tribal women can be measured through the power they have over economic resources to earn income and their per capita income, access to education, access and availability of professional opportunities and participation in economic decision making and their access to political opportunities. Education is the key factor for Tribal women empowerment, prosperity, development and welfare. Discrimination of women from womb to tomb is well known. There is continued inequality and vulnerability of women in all sectors---economic, education, social, political, health care, nutrition, right etc. Women are oppressed in all spheres of life and they need to be empowered in all walk of life. In-order-to fight against the socially constructed gender biases, women have to swim against the system that require more strength. Such strength comes from the process of empowerment and empowerment will come from the education. This study (an impact of education in Tribal women empowerment) aims to find out the effect of education on tribal women . This study tries to find out the status of women in present society, attitude of parents and guardians towards girl's education, problem associated with women empowerment . Moreover, this study aims to focus that tribal women are lagging behind in general awareness, communication skills, health and family welfare aspects etc. Basically,

the study is a theoretical work and is based on secondary data.

Key words--- empowerment, education, oppressed

Introduction

During the last six decades since independence, there has been a phenomenal development of education system in India resulting in the creation of one of the largest education systems of the world. After independence, education sector attracted greater attention of the government . University Education Commission (1948), the first commission in education set up by the government of free India, laid special emphasis on the education of women and recommended that in view of the similar fields of activity for men and women and some specific requirements of women maximum facilities should be given for education . Education was recognized as a powerful instrument of socio-economic advancement of the society in general and a vehicle for upward social mobility for deprived and marginalized sections in particular. India had third largest education system in the world. The deprived sections of the society, especially women, have had limited access to education. In India, there are gender -based educational disparities among various social sections with special reference to caste and religious affiliations. Government of India has been making concerted efforts since independence for bridging the socio-economic gap between male and female population in society though there has been considerable relative improvement. Education, especially has been recognized as a great equalizer and a powerful tool of upward social mobility capable of being used for reducing socio-economic disparities and building an inclusive society.

Women Education

" If you educate a man you educate an individual however, if you educate a women you educate a whole family. Women empowered means mother India empowered."- Jawaharlal Nehru. India is poised to emerge as one of the most developed nations by 2020, more literate, knowledgeable and economically at the forefront. No doubt, women will play a vital role in contributing to the country's development. Women power is crucial to the economic growth of any country. In India, this is yet to meet the requirement despite reforms. Little has been achieved in the area of women empowerment but for this to happen, this sector must experience a chain of reforms. Though India could well become one of the largest economics in the world, it is being hindered due to a lack of women's participation.

Importance of Women Education in India

Education is important for everyone, but is especially significant for girls and women. This is true not only because education is the entry point to other opportunities but also because the educational achievements of women can have ripple effects within the family and across generations. Investing in women education, is one of the most effective ways to reduce poverty.Girls who have been in education are likely to marry later and to have smaller and healthier families. Educated women can recognize the importance of health care and know how to seek it for themselves and their children .Women's literacy rates are significantly lower than men's in most developing countries. Education helps women to know their rights and to gain confidence to claim them and achieve better position in the society. Education of parents is linked to their

children's educational attainment, and the mother's education is usually more influential than the father's. An educated mother's greater influence in household negations may allow her to secure more resources for her children. India is a developing country and facing problem of high population , family planning is very important concept, educated mothers averaging fewer children can concentrate more attention on each child.

Need of Women Empowerment

Empowerment is probably the totality of the following or similar capabilities:---

- Having decision-making power of their own.
- Having access to information and resources for taking proper decision.
- Having a range of options from which one can make choice.
- Ability to exercise assertiveness in collective decision making.
- Having positive thinking on the ability to make change.
- Ability to learn skills for improving one's personal or group power.
- Ability to change other's perceptions by domestic means.
- Involving in the growth process and changes that is never ending and self-initated.
- Increasing one's positive self-image and overcoming stigma.

Women Education Status

The constitutional directive to provide free and compulsory education for children up to the age of 14 years has

remained unfulfilled till now. Education experts admit that this failure is mainly due to the slow progress of education among girls. After many years of Independence, there still exists a great disparity between male and female educational status. In 2011, the percentage of educated persons increased to 74 of which male percentage was 83 and female percentage was 66 respectively. Literacy rate among rural women is only 58.8 percent as per 2011 census. The proportion of women among primary school teacher is mainly due to difficulties that women have to face in serving in rural areas, caused by resistance from their families, the fear of insecurity in villages and lack of physical amenities such as accommodation, schooling, transport and medical facilities. Female literacy was at a national average of 65.5 percentage whereas the male literacy rate was 82.1 percentage.

Definition of "Women Empowerment"

"Women empowerment is defined as the process in which their spiritual, political, social or economic status is raised."This also includes the right to raise their level of confidence regarding their own capabilities.

Review of Related Literature

In her paper on " Women Empowerment and Education: , Jagdeep Singh Pooja(2013) explored that women education in India has a major anxiety of both the government of India and the society who played a very important role in the enlargement of women education in the country. The Education of Women is the most powerful tool to change the position in society. The improvement of women's education in rural areas is very slow. This means women folk in our country are illiterate , backward and exploited.

In their paper on "Empowerment of Women through Education", Jahan Aijaz and Shaskikal A.D.J (2013) corroborated that the most potent weapon related to women's empowerment is education. Education plays an important role in changing women's attitude towards empowerment and their status in family and society. A healthy well educated informed and well employed woman will definitely be able to assert her rights and make concrete contributions to the development process. Thus, education does lead to women development and creates awareness about women's rights and thus in empowering women at all levels.

In her paper on "Education and Women Empowerment in India" ,Sehrwat Joyti (2014) admitted that women constituting the half of the nation are still in social bondage and suffer a lot in the society. Much has happened to raise the educational and social situation of women at the level of policy and rhetoric and perhaps more effort is needed to translate intentions into concrete action to remove the policy performance gaps and the distance between the textual and the contextual position of women. This paper analyzes the concept. It will also explain the problems faced and the possibilities ahead in achieving women empowerment through education.

Duflo,E. (2011) , Women's Empowerment and Economic Development, National Bureau of Economic Research, Cambridge: this study argues that the inter-relationships of the empowerment and development are probably too weak to be self sustaining and that continous policy commitment to equality for its own sake may be needed to bring about equality between men and women.

Frenette.M. Coulombe.S. (2007) . Has Higher Educa-

tion among Young Women Substantially Reduced the Gender Gap in Employment and Earnings? Analytical Studies Brach Research Paper Series, Canada: this research paper examine the role of rapidly rising educational attainment among young women in raising their relative position in the labour market and suggests that the educational trends have not contributed towards a decline in the full time employment gap.

Objectives

ò To study the profile characteristics of tribal women

ò To analyze the factors influencing the economic empowerment of tribal women.

ò To identify the constraints of economic empowerment of tribal women.

ò To find out the status of tribal women's education.

ò To discuss educated tribal women how to communicate with others.

ò To find out tribal women's involvement in their community development.

ò To know the relevance of education in women's life.

ò To analyze the need of women empowerment.

ò To identify the barriers of women education.

ò To examine the impact of women empowerment of the growth of the country.

Objectives to be Achieved through Women Education

ò To change the approach towards women based on sex discrimination.

ò To induce the feeling of self-dependence amongst women.

ò To make women realize their own potential and to provide guidance to them for developing their potential.

ò To create opportunities for them so that they can prove themselves in society and social institutions.

ò To create certain roles for women in economic, political and social area.

10.Research Methodology

This research paper is basically descriptive and analytical in nature . In this paper attempt has been taken to analyze the importance of education for women. The data used in it in purely from secondary sources according to the need of the study.

Barriers of Tribal Women Education

ò For undertaking the responsibilities of household work such as looking after the sibling, fetching water, colleting water, collecting wood, cleaning, cooking etc discourage the girl child to go school.

ò The lower enrolment of girls in school is one of the foundational factors which stand as stumbling block for women education.

ò The incidences of prevalence of dropouts among girls especially in rural, tribal and slum areas seem to be quite high. Most of the times, the girls face difficulty to cope up with the subject and mere not able to concentrate on the subjects.

ò There are many schools with poor basic facilities such as drinking water, latrine and toilet facilities, no good infrastructure and no experienced teachers specially female teachers preferably for any parents for safety of their girl children.

ò Dowry system and other social practices act as main causes of the neglect of the girl child and discrimination against girl child. In many families especially poor and down-trodden think that if their daughters are educated more, they have

to accumulate more assets and properties to provide as dowry in large proportion at the time of marriage, so prefer rather to either stop their children with low education .

Besides, there are some other barriers which are as follows:

*lack of education,
*financial constraints,
*family responsibility,
*low need for achievement,
*Absence of ambitions for the achievement,
*Social status.

The Role of Education in the Empowerment of Women

The concept of Women Empowerment is a recent one. The first year of New Millennium 2001 was declared as "Women Empowerment Year". Education of a woman leads to a better family and ultimately an ideal society to a progressive nation. A progressive nation is one where all the people of the country irrespective of sex, religion, caste and colour are economically, socially, culturally, politically and through all thoughts are independent.To be involved in the dialogue about education systems around the world today is to be understand and articulate the key role played by education. Through education flow of the ideology, values and culture of a nation, state and its people . Misinformation and constricted learning behaviours that women internalize can also be filtered through education. Women education in India plays a very important role in the overall development of half of the human resources, but in improving the quality of life at home and outside . Educated women not only tend to promote education of their chil-

dren but also can provide better guidance to all their children. Moreover, educated women can also help in the reduction of infant mortality rate and growth of the population

Recommendations

ò Create better linkages with mainline departments and other collaborating raining institutions to improve group performance.

ò Access development programmes.

ò Emphasize on creating links to education, health and nutrition initiatives.

ò Training of tribal women to take up their responsibilities and sensitize them about the new provisions.

ò Education helps to improve the sex ratio in controlling population.

ò Education encourages women especially the rural women to take advantage of the various schemes like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Operational Blackboard etc.

ò Education gives power to a woman to become strong physically by giving her knowledge about sports, exercise, health-related aspects good physical health.

ò Education helps in balanced personality development by giving weight to various aspects of personality.

ò Education of women is a guiding light for the children, family members, society, nation and she knows how to have a happy family and balanced and healthy relations with others.

ò Education of women also plays an important role in teaching her expression of feeling or through effective communication which can solve disputes and adjustment problems of any level.

Constitutional Provisions of Women Empowerment

The importance of women as an important human resource was recognized by the Constitution of India which not only accorded equality to women but also empowered the State. A number of Articles of the Indian Constitution repeated towards the socio-economic development of women and participation decision making and some of these are as follows:

*Article 14-Men and Women have to be equal rights and opportunities in the political ,economic and social spheres.

*Article 15(1) - Prohibitions discrimination against any citizens on the grounds of religion, race, sex, caste etc.

*Article16 - Equality of opportunities in matter of public opportunities for all citizens.

*Article39(d)- Equal pay for work for both men and women.

*Article 42- The state to make provision for ensuring first and humane conditions of work and maternity relief.

Findings

There is a positive relationship between education and woman empowerment. Another important aspect in this regard is that, in these societies the issue of women empowerment has been facing certain serious challenges, which are outcome of some certain evil norms and attitudes such as child labour, child marriage, illiteracy, superstition, partial attitude of the parents, female feticides etc and in such situation women empowerment that will allow women to participate in educational programmes and share the benefits. The educational and other policies for women empowerment should be implemented in reality for empowering women in the world.

Conclusion

The present paper in concluded with that education is an important factor by which tribal women can be empowered and get well placed in society. It also brings a reduction in inequalities and functions as a means of improving their status within the family and society. A well educated tribal woman will be definitely taking part in the development process of a nation. On the basis of above detailed analysis, it could be concluded that there is no doubt about the essential need of empowering women through education. But, it is also mandatory that there should be proper implementations what policies are made and what government of India has made different programmes regarding women empowerment.

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Educational Achievement and Self-Esteem of College Students : A Comparative Study Between the Tribal and Non-tribal Girl students of Agartala

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&
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Abstract

Empowerment means moving from enforced powerlessness to a position of power. Education is an essential means of empowering women with the knowledge, skill and self-confidence necessary to fully participate in the development process. In Tripura various efforts are taken to motivate and educate the young generation, especially the girls of our state. In this study an attempt was made to know and compare the level of educational achievement of tribal (N= 50) and non-tribal girl (N= 50) students who are reading in different colleges of Agartala. Also the level of self-esteem of those students was found out by applying Rosenberg self-esteem scale. Purposive sampling method was adopted to collect the data. Result reveals that tribal and non-tribal girl students differ significantly in respect of their educational achievement and self-esteem. Correlation between the variables indicate that the two variables under study are positively correlated with each other.

Introduction

Academic achievement or performance is the outcome of education-the extent of which a student, teacher or institu-

tion has achieved their educational goal. Academic achievement in the context of this study refers to the level at which undergraduate students perform in their course of study at the college. Academic achievement commonly measured by examinations or continuous assessment (but there is no general agreement on how it is best tested or which aspects are most important procedural knowledge such as skills or declarative knowledge such as facts). Good (1945) defines academic achievement as "knowledge attained or skills developed in the school subjects, usually designed by test scores or by marks assigned by teachers , or by both". Wiggins,Shatz,and West (1994) have found that Self-esteem and academic achievement were positively correlated. Demo and Parker (1987) carried out a study on academic achievement and self-esteem among black and white college students. They found that self-esteem scores of Blacks and Whites were not significantly different despite Blacks having low grade point average than whites. Aryana (2010) investigated to examine the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement among pre-university students. The result showed that there was significant positive relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement . Jain and Dixit (2014) in a study on self-esteem of male and female college going students have reported that there was no difference of self-esteem between male and female college student. Bray (2015) studied the influence of academic achievement on a college students' self-esteem. The findings of the result showed that academic achievement and self-esteem have a positive relationship. Another study by Vishalakhi and Jeshodhara (2012) studied on secondary school students and they found that English medium students had more self-

esteem than Kanada medium students (mother tongue) Moreover, the results revealed that there were high positive correlation between high academic achievement and high self-esteem.

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem has become an important topic in academic circle as well as in our society. Everyone's self-esteem is influenced by many factors. (Osborne,1997) In Sociology and Psychology , Self-esteem reflects a persons' overall emotional evaluation of his or her own worth. It is a judgement of oneself as well as an attitude toward the self. Self-esteem encompases beliefs (for example, "I am competent", "I am worthy".) emotions such as triumph, despair, pride and shame. Smith and Mackic define it by saying "The self concept is what we think about the self; self-esteem is the positive or negative evaluations of the self; as in how we feel about it". Self-esteem is also closely associated self conscious. Self-esteem is also known as the evaluative dimension of the self that includes feelings of worthiness, prides and discouragement.

Relation Between Self-Esteem and Academic Achievement

ò High self esteem is generally an important factor and it strengthens the prediction of academic achievement in student.

ò A students' self esteem has a significant impact on almost everything she does-on the way she engages in activities, deals with challenges, and interacts with others.

ò Low self esteem can lesson a students' desire to learn, her ability to focus and her willingness to take risks.

ò Positive self esteem, on the other hand is one of the building blocks of schools success; it provides a firm foundation for learning.

ò Low self esteem can be an obstacle in achieving success in a job, a relationship, and in virtually every area of life.

Objectives of the Study

1.To know the level of academic achievement of tribal and non tribal college students of Agartala.

2.To know the level of self esteem of tribal and non tribal college students of Agartala.

3.To find out whether any relation exists between academic achievement and self esteem.

Methodology

Sample and Sampling Technique

Altogether 50 female tribal and 50 female non-tribal girl students (19-20years) of Arts faculty were studied who read in different colleges of Agartala town. All of them belonged to middle socio-economic class. Purposive sampling technique was adopted in selecting the sample.

Tools used

ò Academic achievement was measured through the percentage of marks achieved in last University exam in honours subjects (TDC Part-I).

ò Self esteem was measured by Rosenbergs'self esteem scale developed by sociologist Dr. Morris Rosenberg (1965). It is a self esteem measure widely used in social science research.

Data Collection and Analysis

The whole process of data collection took a period of 15 days. The socio demographic data of the participants were gathered through the information sheet. In the information sheet data of students'include their name, age, gender, class, category, income, and percentage of honours marks. The academic achievement of students were taken from Part-I university re-

sult. This represented the participants' academic achievement scores. A questionnaire consisted of 10 items were administered with respective instruction.

Result and Discussion

Respondents were categorized into two groups on the basis of their caste-tribal and nontribal. Mean and standard deviation for each group were calculated in terms of academic achievement and self esteem. t values for each case were determined to examine whether tribal and nontribal girl students are different in academic achievement as well as self esteem. Product moment correlation of scores was calculated to find out the relationship between self esteem and academic achievement. The results obtained are shown in the following table.

Table I : Comparison between self esteem and academic achievement of tribal and non tribal girl students.

Variable	Tribal student			Non tribal students			t	df	Level of
	Mean	SD	Standard Error of mean	Mean	SD	Standard Error of mean			significance
Self esteem	15.72	5.12	.72	18.96	4.95	.73	-3.21	98	.01
Academic achievement	43.78	5.20	.69	47.08	6.35	.89	-2.84	98	.01

Table II : Correlation of Self esteem and academic achievement

Variable	Correlation (r)
Self esteem	.81
Academic achievement	

Significance at .01 level

Table I indicates that the mean of self esteem score of tribal student is 15.72 with SD 5.12. On the other hand the mean of self esteem of non tribal student is 18.96 with SD 4.95. The t value between the scores indicate that in case of self-esteem t is -3.21 which is significant at .01 level and the t value between academic achievement reveals that it is -2.84 which is also significant at ,01 level.

The study of the findings in Table- II indicates that the correlation value between self esteem and academic achievement is .81 which is significant at.01 level. This indicates that self esteem and academic achievement are highly and positively correlated with each other.

Conclusion

So on the basis of the present findings and discussion it can be concluded that the tribal girl students possess low self esteem and low academic achievement than the non-tribal students. Further, there is significant relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement.

Among various empirical studies conducted regarding academic achievement of tribal, and research by Sujata (1987) Govinda (2002) suggests that tribal students do possess the basic cognitive abilities and psychological dispositions for successful participation in schools and colleges. In a study conducted by Jabbi and Rajalakshmi (2001), it was found that most of the tribal students have cognitive abilities desirable for educational development irrespective of age and sex. In spite of this, studies on learning achievements of tribal students, both girls and boys have shown lower levels of achievements as compared to non-tribals (Singh 1996).

Good theoretical reasons exist for positing a casual link

between self-esteem and academic success. Healthy self-esteem has been associated with internal locus of control, perceptions of competence, persistence in the face of challenges, coping skills, social support, and a variety of other qualities that are likely to better equip students to succeed in college (Donnellan, Trzesniewski, Conger, & Conger, 2007; DuBois& Flay, 2004; Haney &Durlak, 1998; Koch, 2006; Swann, Chang-Schneider, &McClarty, 2007). However, while the relationship between self-esteem and achievement is well established, the nature of the link remains a matter of considerable debate. Cross-sectional research has consistently found correlations between self-esteem and academic success (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, &Vohs, 2003; Hansford & Hattie, 1982; Tice &Gailliot, 2006). More recent longitudinal investigations of the link between self-esteem and academic achievement have found as much indication that achievement enhances self esteem as they have that self-esteem enhances achievement. Our study indicates that tribal student possess a low self-esteem, may be due to their minority status in colleges of Agartala.It is believed that minorities have a low quality of life, are exposed to social exclusion and marginalization. (Ahmad A, Bradby H, 2008). Mental health of minorities has received extensive attention of many researchers over the year (Crano WD, Seyranian V. 2007). Studies emphasize several proactive factors connected with mental health disparity of minorities. Among these proactive factors; minority status and related stressors are frequently reported to be linked with elevated mental illness particularly lower self-esteem in minority groups. Impact of self-esteem in the well-being of minorities has also received considerable attention in literature.

So, from numerous empirical findings we can interpret our finding and conclude that the tribal students as minorities are prone to become victims of low self esteem. The findings of the present study suggest that minority status of college students in our state may make them susceptible to lower self-esteem. Regarding low self-esteem in minority youth of the town we can conclude that their perception of negative environment and negative feedback in the form of discriminatory statements may result in low self-worth and low competence in academic ability in them. This pessimistic pattern of self-evaluation as compared to their dominant counterparts' may predispose them to low self-esteem which may effect negatively their academic performance.

Suggestion

It is very much necessary to take some measures particularly for female tribal students to improve their mental health which will in turn help them to achieve academic success as well as to enhance their self esteem level, so that they will be able to adjust more adequately with the outer world. The college can take initiative to give personal attention to each student so that they can

ò Enhance self-perceptions, self-esteem, self-concept (academic and social), and racial identity.

ò Improve their skills in studying, time management, organization, and taking tests

ò Involve family members as partners in the educational process.

ò Address education-related factors, including providing teachers and counselors with gifted and multicultural training to meet both the academic and affective needs of gifted mi-

nority students. This training should include strategies for improving student-teacher relations, teacher expectations, and the classroom climate.

Limitation of the Study

This study suffers from several limitations

ò The sample size is too small to make any generalization.

ò There may be several other variables which can effect academic achievement.

ò Tribal students could be divided into communities.

ò It should be taken into consideration whether the tribal students are local or came from remote area; the control group also should be matched in view of the above information.

But this study is a pilot study with limited time and scope. Further research in this area should notice all these factors and then the study will be a complete one.

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Empowerment Through Education Among Tribal Women of Tripura

Dr. Pradeep Kumar Deepak

This paper makes an attempt to justify the over-all impact of tribal women's education in Tripura by which the women empowerment in case of tribal women can be achieved. Education is a key to success for the empowerment of tribal women, who reside in the hilly, terrain and far-flung remote areas. As a matter of fact, in a patriarchal society, the role of females is always subordinated in comparison to their male counterparts, despite the fact that they contributed substantially in every spheres of developmental activities. In India and especially in Tripura, the tribal women are not empowered with greater opportunities, because they lag far behind from their male counterparts in the matters of literacy and quality education. This type of discriminatory behaviour on the basis of gender parameter produced abundant problems of empowerment among the tribal women of Tripura.

It is observed that like other parts of India, Tripura also lacks in the field of tribal women's empowerment. Still the percentage of tribal women of Tripura in various white-coloured jobs seems to be negligible due to their backwardness in education. Either be the aspects of political representation or social status; either be the aspects of economic empowerment

or educational opportunities; they form the level of minority.

This paper also explains in detail about the social, cultural and economic impacts of the lives of tribal women of Tripura, which is the outcome of their backwardness in education. This is why, it is an urgent need of the hour that the tribal women of this state must be imparted quality education in order to get the maximum benefit of empowerment. Swami Vivekananda has rightly observed, "There is no chance of the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing."

The Significance of education for tribal women:

Education in the tribal areas has always been a matter of great concern & the lack of it has always had a negative impact on the development of the tribal people. Primary Education & continued education in the rural and remote areas has suffered due to lack of institutional facilities, absence of teachers from the schools, lack of school books & other physical facilities primary schools as well as similar problems in the secondary & high schools. Hence very few of such schools were found to be properly running in the remote areas. The literacy rate amongst boys and girls in areas where predominantly tribal people reside, has always been governed by two major facts-

i)The poor socio-economic conditions of the tribal people &

ii) The lack of political &administrative will to provide good institution.

1. The tribal Society and education

The tribal society has retained till today most of its primitive characteristics. Most of them are still under the poverty line. They are still ignorant and victims of money lenders. For

all around improvement of tribals, special emphasis is to be given on the educational aspect. Tribals of India are also apathetic towards education which is due to multifarious reasons, which are given below:

a) High Pupil Teacher ratio.
b) Defective Curricula.
c) Stagnation of failure depending on a improper system of education.
d) Poverty.
e) Lack of motivation.
f) Improper teaching techniques in primary schools.
g) Parental indifference to education.
h) Irregularity of attendance.
i) Admission to under aged children and
j) Improper entry behaviour and lack of harmony between educational system and tribal social life and many other causes.

Most of the tribal student are conservative, shy, homicide in an alien environment. Again tribal villages are not density populated so schools are established in a distant place. In West Tripura District it is seen that primary schools are available for children in their own habitation or at-least within a walking distance of 1.5 Kms. But mostly, schools in tribal areas are single teacher schools are even 2 miles away from a village. There is no harmony between the opening hours at schools of the way of life of tribals. The schools have certain fixed hours but children are not available during that period as they go out to collect food, fuel or supplement their family income.

2. Inequality

Educational policies promote educational inequality within a country specially as between urban and rural areas, sexually as between boys and girls, generationally as between younger and adult and socially as between the rich and poor has been documented extensively. The most serious and perceived expansion of inequality in the educational system in the intra-generation one, namely the bias of the system in favour of children and students from the richer sections of society as against vast majority who are from poor families.

Sixty percent of the students who drop out before class-v, the stage at which lasting literacy is acquired, and of those eighty percent who drop out before the end of the second level are from the poverty section of society.

3. Failure in Examination

4. Lack of Interest in Education

5. Poverty

6. No Parental Goading

7. Drop Out

8. Medium of Instruction

Problems faced by tribal women in terms of livelihood

The tribal people of Tripura, who come under the category of 'Scheduled tribes' in terms of the provision of the Constitution of India are facing a lot of problems in terms of

livelihood, because their Kok-Borok language is not sufficient for providing them the opportunities in job market. This is why, We observe that the HDI (Human Development Indices) of tribal population is quite low as compared to the rest of the population of the state. This is also mainly because they live in clusters generally in far flung areas, which are remote or in the vicinity of forests and consequently enjoy an effective isolation from the main stream of the country. Their more or less isolated life prevents them from exploiting many advantages of modern civilization. The development programme meant for the general public often elude the tribal population for the reasons of inaccessibility and difficult terrain. K.S.Singh has rightly pointed out, "The tribals are dispossessed of their land, forest, trade and commerce and finally of their culture of which language and dialect are vital modes, unlike the inhabitants of any other North- Eastern state the original of Tripura, both tribals and non-tribals have been submerged by the growing mass of the non-tribals, neutralising the process of acculturation. (Singh,K.S., Ethnicity,Identity and Development, The Fourth Verrier Elwin Lecture, 1985, Shillong, Maohar,New Delhi, pp- 23-27).

Nevertheless the Government of India and the State Governments have taken a number of measures over the years to improve the conditions of STs and for their development. But a lot more needs to be done. The linguistic dominance can be easily observed in this small state in the field of jobs related to administration, politics, culture or education. The tribal people like Debbarmas ,staying in and around Agartala, who have adopted Bengali / English language can get better opportunities to qualify as doctor or any white-coloured jobs ; while the

Kok-Borok language finds no place in the sphere of livelihood matters.

At this juncture, I intend to state that simply recognising 'Kok-Borok' language as one of the official languages of this state will not be sufficient for the welfare of the tribal people of Tripura. This language must be made a 'language of livelihood' for the tribal people; only then it will pave their future. On the contrary, it will be simply a language of the library.

Strategies to be focussed on vocationalisation for empowering tribal women

Article '46' of the Constitution of India states, "The state shall promote with special care the education and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and in particular of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustices and all forms of social exploitation."

This is why,it is the great need of the hour that we should look into the matters of the tribal people of this state. A lot of Government policies have been made to upgrade their status by means of providing them ample scholarships and reservations of the seats in the employment. But, who takes the benefit of these welfare measures? Generally, among the tribal people, the persons who are from affluent families and receive their education in a reputed institutions in English/ Bengali medium. Therefore, Kok-Borok language must be given due preference in the matters of vocationalisation. I mean to say that from the high school onwards the students must be imparted the vocational training along with their normal studies.

The tribal people, who dwell in the far flung remote hilly areas, are mostly deprived of the essential requirements of

normal human beings. Such as: - food, shelter, clothing, health, education etc. If we want that they should also lead a comfortable life, then we must think of their real problems in a practical manner as Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation had always insisted that India would become truly independent only when the poorest of its people would be free from sufferings. How to feed their stomach?- is a burning question in front of them. Therefore, the tribals of the hilly and dense forest areas should be well-trained in acquiring their means of living, i.e., 'the livelihood skills' in a better manner.

Suggestion to improve the socio-economic condition of the tribal women

Though Tripura ranks first in the literacy rate as per the latest statistical data, but still the socio- economic condition of the tribal people inside dense forest and in the remote hilly areas is pathetic. The followings are the suggestion to improve their socio-economic condition:-

ò The Government should start English medium schools in the remote tribal villages in order to provide the tribal students a lot of opportunities in terms of job.

ò The teacher- student ratio should be maintained in a proper manner for quality education.

ò In- service training for teachers should be started to improve the quality of education.

ò Model residential schools should be started in each block, where the poor rural S.T. students should be imparted free and compulsory education like their urban fellows.

ò The small scale industries should be started in the tribal areas.

ò The students should be imparted vocational training

such as the bamboo- work, embroidery etc.

ò The proper education of the information technology should be imparted to the rural S.T. students from the high school onwards.

ò Government English medium colleges should be opened to provide the tribal students a lot of opportunities in the higher education.

ò At the same time they must be imparted the education of Kok-Borok language to retain their rich cultural heritage and eternal tradition.

Conclusion

From the above analysis, it can be concluded that the present education system all over the country included tribal areas is still British in from and content. It suffers from deficiency all round together with corruption and political interference. It creates, misfits as the education taught how has not much relevance to the real life. The education and employment are not properly linked. It should be mentioned here that education is a process which can mobilised and change the society, the men of society and the culture of the society. Whether the process of education will favour the tribal people or not, the answer of the question concretely depends on the accommodative attitudes and adaptability of the tribal people and on the conseiveness as well as the permits of their society.The problems are more acute in case of rural students then urban students, because it may be due to the loss facilities available in rural area and poor economic condition. Moreover, the rural students are used to devote less time in their study the urban students, as they spend their maximum time to earn money for their family. Therefore, more attention to be

taken to the tribal students of rural area than urban area to solve their problems.

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Empowerment of Tribal Women Through Education : A Study of the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission, Khonsa, Arunachal Pradesh

Dr. Satyadeo Poddar
&
Nirmalya Karmakar

The place Khonsa

Khonsa is the headquarter of Tirap district in the state of Arunachal Pradesh. The town is cosmopolitan in nature primarily occupied by the Nocte and Wanchoo tribes. Besides these traditional tribes, the population of Khonsa also consists of migrants from the nearby states of Nagaland and Assam. This place was under the control of the British during the era of colonization. Khonsa is one of those regions of Arunachal Pradesh that firmly hold on to the age old customs and traditions. Yet, some years ago the town and its shops would often stay open with activity until eight o'clock or later. But after the insurgents started coming and making their demands, the town now closes up shortly after dark, which is around 5 pm or later. It is a military area marked by Assam Rifles and CRPF battalions. The people became fearful of what could happen. Even though the police and military have increased its numbers to add protection, the people have become extra cautious, and there are certain things that they can no longer do. This is one way in which their freedom to practice their culture is being threatened. Surrounded by panoramic views of thick forests fringed by hills, Khonsa is a back to nature destination. The people in

the region are extremely hospitable and courteous. They are simple, humble, shy, and incredibly conscientious of others' feelings and well being. They maintain ecological lifestyles and acquire whatever they need by living off the land.

Western missionaries process to "civilize" the people

The northeast region has become so infected by western missionaries and conversions that they want to secede from the rest of India and become their own Christian country, against the wishes of those who want to remain a part of their own cultural identity. Because of the influence of western evangelists, the local traditions are now in the process of being transformed beyond recognition or wiped out totally. Taking advantage of the poverty, lack of employment and education, these foreign missionaries have lured away a large part of the people from their traditional moorings. Types of food, drink, dress, songs, dances and festivals are all being lost or forgotten because of recently being regarded as unrighteous, and being replaced by modern western pop songs and dances. However, the people have not completely snapped the bond with the culture of their forefathers. Conversion tears the individual away from his or her family, and from the rest of the community. Acts of conversion, therefore, create social unrest and clashes in an area that has until recently been a place of community peace and cooperation. One of the methods of the missionary schools to make Christian converts is that they offer free education to the local children. They educate them freely for one or two years and then begin charging them for books and clothes. Thus, the education narrows their views of their own culture to the point where they willingly give it up and help perpetuate that limited notion.

Swami Vivekananda's idea of Women Empowerment

Swami Vivekananda saw women educated and free during his travels in the West and he dreamed of bringing education to the women of India. He said: 'Ideal characters must always be presented before the view of the girls to imbue them with a devotion to lofty principles of selflessness. The noble examples of Sita, Savitri, Damayanti, Lilavati, Khana, and Mira should be brought home to their minds, and they should be inspired to mould their own lives in the light of these. Obviously, Swamiji's feet were firmly planted on the cultural soil of India. Women really do not need to be empowered by men. He did not think it was possible for men to solve women's problems. Their duty lay in providing education and opportunity to women, and once that was done women would automatically become capable of looking after themselves. This has been the Ramakrishna Mission's basic attitude to women's welfare and the philosophy underlying all its activities in this sphere. Let us now look at the work done by Ramakrishna Sarada Mission Ashrama School, Khonsa, one of the Mission's model institutions, which has, of late, been giving more attention to gender sensitization in order to fight rural poverty.

Swami Vivekananda had an idea of starting math for women, for he knew that there would be no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women was improved. In one of his letters, he said, "Hence it is that my first endeavor is to start a Math for women." He also wrote, "With Holy Mother as the centre of inspiration, a Math is to be established on the eastern bank of the Ganga. As Brahmacharins and Sadhus will be trained in this Math (Belur Math) so in the other Math also, Brahmacharinis and Sadhvis will be trained." Though the Swami

was very eager to have women's Math started as quickly as possible where a band of educated Sannyasinis could be trained to serve humanity, his idea, however, could not take shape at that time because of lack of education among women and the prevailing social conditions. Fifty years after his passing away, a number of educated women, inspired with his ideals of renunciation and service, came to dedicate their lives for their own spiritual growth as well as for the uplift of their sisters. In 1954, in the year of Holy Mother's birth centenary, the authorities of the Belur Math thought that it was high time to give a concrete shape to the ideas of Swami Vivekananda. Accordingly, a suitable piece of land with some buildings was procured on the eastern bank of the Ganga, a little north of the Dakshineswar Kali Temple.

[1] Vivekananda Swami, The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda Volume 6, Advaita Ashrama

The backdrop of opening a School for girls in Arunachal Pradesh

Nearly three decades after independence, Arunachal Pradesh virtually remained a backwater untouched by the march of progress and civilization. Against this backdrop to create a resurgent India as envisioned by the patriot-saint Swami Vivekananda, the upliftment of its masses then, would constitute the first step. For this to happen, the benefit of education must percolate down the masses. In August 1972, K. A. A. Raja, Chief Commissioner of Arunachal Pradesh and later Lt. Governor came to meet the General Secretary of Sri Sarada. Math, Pravrajika Muktiprana. Arunachal Pradesh was then a Union

Territory and their Raja was responsible for its governance. He said the society there was not progressing because of the lack of modern education for girls. There were schools for boys but no opportunities for girls. The A.P. administration approached the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission authorities to open an educational centre to disseminate knowledge and culture, to raise the status of the tribal women of Arunachal Pradesh and to improve their standard of living. The goal is the development of the local culture through the arts and crafts for economic progress and freedom from the schemes of the Church to bride people with money to become Christian. If girls who could apply their education at home and in the village are not educated, society cannot hope to improve. He earnestly requested Pravrajika Muktiprana that the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission to open a school for girls of that area. Pravrajika Muktiprana took Pravrajika Shraddhaprana with her to see the place. From Dibrugarh, they went one hundred forty kilometres by car to the very small town of Khonsa, perched on top of the Patkoi hills. At this tiny place, the seat of the government of Tirap district, they met the chief of the village of Khonsa. He donated an entire forested hill to the Mission.

Genesis

The opening ceremony of the primary section of the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission School was held at a temporary site on February 17th, 1973, the auspicious Maghi Purnima day.

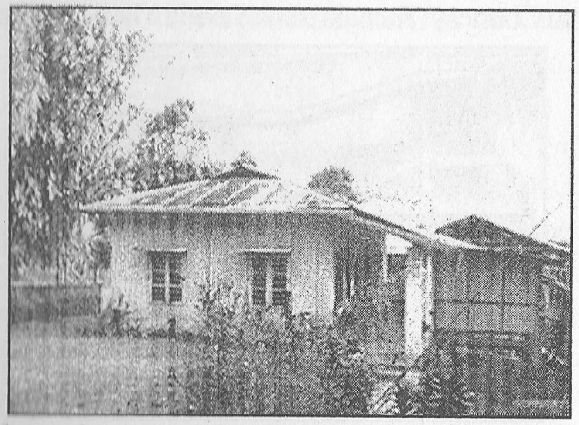
On January 28th 1974, the day of the Saraswati puja, the permanent site with its few buildings were consecrated with a special puja. In 1973, Rev swami Vireswaranandaji Maharaj, the President of Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission,

blessed the institution and spoke of its new venture... to spread education amongst the girls of Arunachal and to integrate them with the national life of the motherland."

[1] The Story of Ramakrishna Mission: Swami Vivekananda's Vision and Fulfilment, Advaita Ashrama, 2006

[2] Samvit: Knowledge that Leads to Enlightenment, Issues 35-38, Sri Sarada Math, 1997

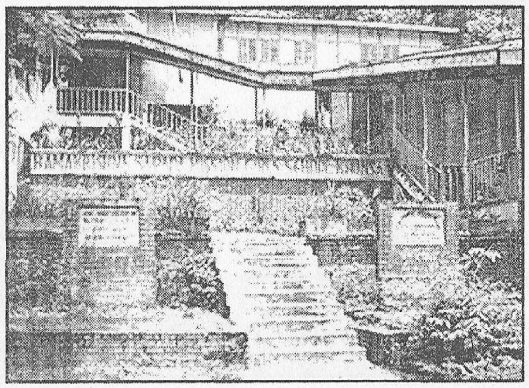
Swami Vireswaranandaji at Khonsa Ashrama.
Photo Courtesy: Ramakrishna Sarada Mission, Khonsa.



The School was formally inaugurated on the 17th February 1973

and was declared open by Smt. Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister on the 19th November 1976. With an initial enrolment of 58 students in 1973, in three classes Preparatory, Class I & II, the school has now blossomed into a full-fledged residential school mainly catering to the all-round development of the tribal girl students of Arunachal Pradesh. The school is affiliated to CBSE, New Delhi, and follows the 10+2 pattern of education.

Smt. Indira Gandhi, PM India at Khonsa Ashrama
Photo Courtesy: Ramakrishna Sarada Mission, Khonsa.



The new site of the school, located on a hillock opposite

to the Khonsa Township, was a gift from the Khonsa village. The school, mainly residential and meant for the tribal girls, is run on the lines of ancient Indian Gurukul system. Six hostels namely Bharatiprana Bhavan, Sita Bhavan, Maitreyee Bhavan, Savitri Bhavan, Sarada Bhavan and Nivedita Bhavan. There are two other smaller hostels. These are - Old Gargi Bhavan; and New Gargi Bhavan. The student consists of girls mostly from the Tirap District although some seats are allotted to candidates from other districts as well as to the children of Govt. officers working in Khonsa.

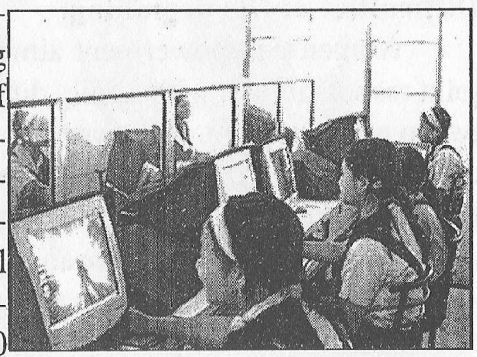
Difficulties at the beginning:

Women's empowerment aims at equal partnership and joint responsibility, with family duties distributed equally between man and wife. However, for the experiment to be successful, at least in the Indian context, one more vital element needs to be kept in focus: the entire experiment should be based on an awareness of the culture and spiritual values of the land. And mothers being the architects of their children's lives, their education have to be given priority. Women are teachers as well as mothers. As the proverb goes, 'If you educate a man, you educate only one person; but if you educate a woman, you educate a whole family.' It was an arduous task for the sannyasinis and brahmacharinis. In this volatile environment, a school was started in February 1973. The Khonsa School was entirely residential. The tribal children had to be trained in a variety of areas including such basic ones as healthy eating habits and personal hygiene. The children were taught reading and writing, starting with the alphabet. Since their tribal languages were unknown to the Mission workers, they communicated in a mix of Assamese and English. However, within only

a few months it was found that when they returned home during vacations, they bathed their younger siblings and tried to keep their homes and environment clean. In ten or fifteen years, not only Khonsa but even nearby villages were changed! The appearance of the whole society was completely transformed. In 1981, the students took the CBSE examination for the first time.

Facilities & Amenities provided to the children:

Well-equipped Laboratories of Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics and Geography give them hands-on experience of science. Computer Laboratory keeping pace with the dynamics of change, the school could introduce Computer education with the help of the government. Moreover a well stocked library-cum- reading room with over 9000 books ranging from story books, fiction, encyclopedias, cultural literature, biographies and very useful reference books. The library subscribes to nearly 26 magazines and journals.



Keeping pace with the dynamics of change, the school could introduce Computer education with financial and infrastructural help from North Eastern Council,

not just as a subject but more importantly to augment and supplement learning. A step further, with the approval of the Board class X is offered IT as an additional subject and has set brilliant record with their lofty feat in the AISSE.

Physical & Health Programmes:

The institution believes in an ethos of 'strong mind in a strong body'. Yoga and pranayama are regularly practiced. Different Sports facilities are included such as - Badminton, Throw ball, Shot-put etc. A new playground with gallery and modern facilities is in the hatchet. March Past, PT, Band Display are encouraged.

Cultural and Spiritual Ethos:

Swami Vivekananda had cautioned, "Learning science should not be at the expense of ancient spirituality". Daily prayers in morning and evening, bhajans, Vedic chanting and Gita chanting help in spiritual growth and harmony. Festivals like Janmashthami, Saraswati Puja, Shivaratri, Christmas Eve and birthdays of the Holy Trio are celebrated with deep involvement of children. Through Vidyarthi Homa students take vows for higher values in life. The values and virtues of Gurukula system are inextricably blended into the system. Importance of 'dignity of labour' is inculcated early in the students' life. Daily duties like sweeping and cleaning dormitories, surroundings, classrooms, washing one's own clothes, community serving, shrine work etc. while making them self-reliant also in-

spires in them an attitude of sharing and caring. The Environment education goes beyond the bounds of textbooks. Sensitivity to nature is an inherited quality. Children love to do gardening and are quite adept at it. The institution, thus earnestly strives to create through its holistic approach a life-long learning culture for the harmonious development of personality - physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual based on the man-making, character building and nation-building ideas of Swami Vivekananda.

Vocational Training:

Fully realizing the importance and urgency of the uplift of women, if we are to save our cultural traditions and spiritual values and counter the negative trends that are now affecting our body politics, Ramakrishna Sarada Mission has been putting in much effort to promote spiritual values in rural students lives and they conducts regular programmes of Vocational Training to make them aware of their true power. The school in collaboration with Local Self Help Groups organize cultural and value-orientation programmes and other meetings on their own for their all-round development. Empowerment is complete only when a given community takes full control of its own development and the implementing agency, much like a catalytic agent, remains in the background after initiating the process of change. This is exactly what the School does: once the machinery it has set up is in working order, it hands over the management of affairs to the grass-root organization or SHG, and itself remains in the background to provide motivation and guidance from time to time. The vocational and training classes such as sewing, weaving, painting, cane-work etc., are immensely enjoyed by the students.

Village Development

In 1979, at the request of the village elders and the local people, Sunday classes were started for Khonsa Basti children. The classes were aimed at imparting elementary knowledge in health & hygiene, apart from coaching in regular curriculum.These classes were gradually shaped into a full-fledged primary school from Pre-I to Class V. Performance of its children in the Arunachal Board Examination has been quite outstanding. The school counted 99 and 103 children on its roll in 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 respectively. The school is run under the guidance of an honorary principal and a dedicated teacher and six others of whom three are alumni of the Mission and belongs to Khonsa village. The school renders valuable service to the area. Apart from the main school, a primary school is run exclusively for the children of the neighboring villages popularly known as the 'Green school'. They are day-scholars and undergo a similar education system. Children are encouraged in all the activities like the main school.

Khonsa Village Primary School

The Mission also runs a satellite school in its campus. It began as a small enterprise on 24th July 1979 with Sunday classes for the local tribal children in Khonsa village, gradually grew into tutorial classes and finally got transformed into a regular Primary School in 1987, affiliated to the Arunachal Pradesh Board, backed by the appeal of the Khonsa village Chief, village elders and local people. Nearly 203 students are studying in this school. Recently, its building received a face-lift and two more blocks were added to it. Basically incorporating the same syllabus and activities as the main school, the school has been making steady progress ever since its incep-

tion. Students after passing out mostly get admission into Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Tissa where they pursue their higher studies.

Promotion of Self-reliance and Co- Curricular Activities among the students

The Sarada Mission School did a lot for the total upliftment of the students by encouraging them in co-curricular activities. A wide range of competitions such as literary, scientific and cultural forms part of the school's curriculum which are organized regularly. Annual Sports Meet, Annual Function, Science Exhibition is regular features of the school's calendar. Moreover Independence Day, Republic Day, Teachers, Day, National Youth Day and birthdays of national leaders are observed with great éclat, which instill a spirit of patriotism in the children. One of the great feature of this school is regular educational tours and excursions to places like Kolkata, Pune, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Chennai etc. expose them to the main stream of national life. Children are encouraged to participate in external contests- Essay writing, Quiz, Painting and have won accolades for their excellent performance.

Student Achievement

The School is now one of the premier educational institution for girls in Arunachal Pradesh: Every year the students are achieving very high percentage in the academics & are bagging gold medals in the State level and national level competitions. Khonsa School stood First in the National Level Science Seminar organized by the National Council of Science Museums, Kolkata held at the Nehru Science Science Centre., Mumbai on the topic Chandrayan-Promises and concerns. In the past years the students did remarkable achievements: Miss

Duyu Udi (Cl. IX) secured the second position in the National level in by NCSM in 2008. Her topic was: `Water Crisis : Problems & Remedies'. Miss Sonam Lhamu Monpa (Cl.IX) was declared Ist in the National Level conducted in 2009. The Topic was 'Chandrayaan: Prospects and Concerns'. Miss Rikmi Changmi (Cl.IX) secured the second position at the State level Seminar in 2010. The Topic was : 'India and World Science: Are We there? Ms Luni Bangsia, a past student the School joined Kalakshetra Foundation, a famous classical dance institute in Chennai founded by Rukmini Devi Arundale. She learned Bharatanatyam for six years under many great Gurus like Bala Gopalan, Leela Samson. She wants to popularize Bharatanatyam and other classical dance forms in Tirap district so that the youth, especially the Tirap girls realized the importance and popularity of classical dance. Luni is indeed a path-breaker.

The School traveled a long way

Ramakrishna Sarada Mission, Khonsa has traveled a long way since it began its journey 35 years ago. It would be difficult to catalogue the dramatic transformation that has occurred in this area by the magic word 'education'. The quality of work of the School can be judged by the fact that the pass out students are becoming doctors, engineers, lawyers, administrators, but are also taking active roles and important positions in local government to work for the preservation of the cultures. Many also come back to Arunachal to work toward the development of the state and its people. The education provided in the Sarada Mission School is based on the principle of "Man Making and Nation Building," which encompasses a full curriculum of subjects and activities for mental, intellectual, physical and spiritual development. With an initial enrolment of 58

students in 1973, in three classes Preparatory, Class I & II, the school has now blossomed into a full-fledged residential school mainly catering to the all-round development of the tribal girl students of Arunachal Pradesh.

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[2] Research Scholar, Dept. of History, Tripura University.

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Tribal Women Empowerment Through Financial Inclusion

Sunirmal Biswas

Abstract

Tribal women are more vulnerable than others. So far empowerment is concerned tribal women need to give special emphasis. They have equal contribution in all type of socio-economic activities to their families. Tribal women can be empowered through inclusive financial policies.

Financial inclusion can help them to bring into the fold of formal financial system. Financial inclusion is the way of delivering financial services through an affordable cost to the poor, deprived and vulnerable section of the society by means of fair, feasible & secured delivery mechanism. Tribal women have acute need of financial assistances for performing various economic activities like household preparation, agriculture, crafts, raring, handloom, piggery, forestry, cutting & tailoring, running SHG groups etc. Informal sources of finance causing losses to them as they are to bear higher percentage of interest on repayment.

This paper is prepared on the basis of data collected through primary and secondary sources that reveal the nature of financial literacy and accessibility of financial services by the tribal women in the selected study area of Tripura. It also suggested findings and valuable recommendation towards strengthening of tribal womens socio-economic condition.

Key words

Vulnerable, Economic Condition, Tribal Communities, Financial

Inclusion)

Introduction

"Empowerment" is the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. Empowerment consists of self-strength, control, self-power, self-reliance, own choice, life of dignity in accordance with one's values, capable of fighting for one's rights, independence, own decision making, being free, awakening, and capability-to mention only a few."Women-Empowerment" may be defined as a multidimensional social process that helps women in gaining control over their own lives. It fosters capacity in them, for use in their own lives, their community, and in their society by acting on issues that they define as important. Financial Inclusion is the way of delivering financial services through an affordable cost to the poor, deprived and vulnerable section of the society by means of fair, feasible & secured delivery mechanism. Financial Inclusion services stand to provide bank accounts, deposits, withdrawals, transfer & remittance services, loan products, micro-credit, micro-finance, advisory and awareness services etc.

Objective of the Study

1. Understand Financial Inclusion Among Tribal Women
2. Measuring Degree of Inclusion & Exclusion
3. Identify Barriers of Inclusion
4. Suggest Possible Solution for Inclusion

Limitation of that Study

1. Study Confined with One R.D.Block in Tripura
2. Randomly Selected Sample Size Limited up to 100
3. Outcome of Further Studies may differentiate
4. Limited Time and Resources

Methodology

1. Research Type: Descriptive & Exploratory
2. Study Area: Mandwai R.D.Block, West Tripura District

3. Sample Size: 100 nos.
4. Data Source: Primary & Secondary
5. Primary Data Collection: Through Structured Questionnaire

Financial Requirement of Tribal Women

Various financial needs to the tribal women can be explained as below:

1. Domestic Purpose: It is important to maintain family expenditures by the tribal women which need adequate cash and goods. Domestic purposes are maintenance of food staff, clothings, feast and festivals, housekeeping, house building etc.

2. Agriculture & Fishing: Tribal women performing activities equal to their male counterpart. Most of them associated with agricultural activities i.e. Jhum cultivation as well as plain land farming. Fishing is an important economic activity to the tribal women which strengthening their economic condition upto large extent. Both agriculture and fishing require adequate supply of funds from bank and other institutions so that they can meet necessary expenditure for purchasing seeds, plaughing, fertilizers, purchasing equipments etc.

3. Handloom & Crafts: Handloom & Craft is a long back tradition to the tribal women. It is required to be modernised. For that they require financial assistance to increase productivity and to build up small scale industries.

4. Animal Husbandry: Most of the tribal women are associated with animal husbandry activities. Goattery, Piggery, Cattle rearing, Poultry etc. are very common in their society which requires financial assistance.

5. Plantation & Forestry: Basically, tribal people are living in the hilly areas were plantation and forestry is the major source of income for their livelihood.

6. Cutting & Tailoring: Tribal women involved with cutting and tailoring activities may strengthen boost up their business through in-

vestment. They may take help of bank and other financial institutions for the same.

7. Running SHG's: Formation of SHGs now becomes an essential activity to various agencies. SHG's linking with bank is also a priority issue. Through SHGs they can get credit from bank and other institutional players.

8. Health & Education: Adequate finance also requires meeting health expenditure. It can be made affordable through health insurance. Now a days a good amount is required for education purpose. There are provision of getting subsidized educational loan from bank and other financial institutions.

9. Miscellaneous: Apart from the above financial services may be required for performing any other types of activities. For that better access to the institutional players should be ensured in the door step.

VI. Financial Institutions in the Study Area

Mandwai R.D.Block				
Formal	No. of Entity	Informal/ Semi Formal	No. of Entity (Approx.)	Remarks
TGB	3	Money Lender	30+	
SBI	nil	Club	7	
UBI	1	NGO	450+	
TSCB	1	Land Lord	200+	
MFI	8	SHG Group	1250+	
LAMPS	3	Shop & Establishment	50	
PACS	3			
SMALL SAVINGS AGENT	23+			
POSTOFFICE	4			
SBI CSC	6			
TGB BC	8			

Source: Field Survey, January 2015.

Source: Field Survey, January 2015

From the above table, we observe that in Mandwai R.D.Block there is a combination of formal and informal financial sources. Besides nationalized banks there are RRBs, cooperative banks, LAMPS, PASCS and post offices serving the people. In the informal side there is also sufficient no. of players rendering financial services. It indicates that in spite of having formal institutions large no. of people are dependent on informal sources i.e. they are excluded from the mainstream system.

VII. Occupational Distribution of Respondents

Sl. NO.	Occupational Classification of Respondent	No. of Women Represents (out of 100)	Average Monthly Income	Surplus
1.	Agriculture & Fishing	15	500-1000	300
2.	Handloom & Crafts	10	1000-1500	500
3.	Animal Husbandry	15	1200-1500	400
4.	Plantation & Forestry	10	1000-1500	500
5.	Cutting & Tailoring	10	1500-2000	700
6.	Running SHG's	40	700-1000	200
7.	House Hold Activities	50	=500	100

Here, occupational classification to the selected respondents has been floated. It has been observed that maximum respondents are attached with SHGs and Household activities. Maximum income generated from the source of cutting and tailoring where enrollment of women is lesser than other occupation. Agriculture is producing lesser surplus as maximum production consuming by the family members. Every economic activity is measured in terms of monetary value.

Respondent Inclusion - Exclusion

1. 60 Women having Savings Bank A/C
2. 15 Having Fixed Deposit Account
3. No Women having Current Account
2. 25 Women having no bank A/C
3. 10 Women having Insurance Policy
4. 90 Women having no Insurance Policy
5. 10 Women taken loan from bank
6. 25 Women taken credit from MFI
7. 27 Women access credit from informal sources like Money lenders, Family and Friends
8. 38 Women not taking any credit

Findings Barriers of Inclusion

- Lack of Literacy and Awareness about Financial Product and Services
- Due to Complexity in Loan Processing dependent on Informal Sources of finance
- In some cases found no sufficient income, No surplus cash for savings
- Account opened only for getting Govt. benefits like MGNREGA wage, NOAP, IAY etc.
- Geographically far from the reach of the Financial Institutions
- Cultural barriers- women are treating as second class citizen in the family

Financial Inclusion Benefit to the Tribal Women

Having access to resources on their own account and to the tools that help them to earn a living can increase women's bargaining power within households and their influence over how money and other resources are used. Secondly, financial

inclusion can help increase women's opportunities to earn an income or control assets outside the household. Thirdly, it can reduce women's vulnerability by, for example, allowing them to insure against risk or borrow to meet unexpected expenses, such as medical treatments. These are all key factors for economic empowerment and they can also help to empower tribal women more broadly. Other benefits of financial inclusion are as follows:

- Helps in increasing self esteem, gaining confidence
- Increase participation in decision making process
- Protect & secured their rights in the society
- Ensure all round empowerment and development

Maximize Women Financial Inclusion

- Conducting periodical sensitization Program on financial Inclusion
- Institutions should reach at the door step and to interact with target group
- Inspire to form SHGs & link with bank
- Women should receive financial benefits through their own accounts,
- Inspire for deposit of cash with bank not with unorganized sectors
- Customize financial products & services specially for women beneficiaries
- Bank Mitras should be in close connection with rural women entrepreneurs
- Special privileges to be given to the women in financial affairs

Conclusion

Inclusive growth is quite impossible without women's economic empowerment. Economic empowerment requires more financial inclusion. Financial discipline and accountability of income generation must be ensured, leakages to the govt. funds should be prevented. In tribal societies women are performing more than half of every activity, so they need to empower first. Women health, education, business activity, social security etc. requires sufficient financial assistance, rationing of credits, savings, insurance etc. without which they shall remain vulnerable, underprivileged. Self Help Groups, cooperatives, increasing participating of women in economic & political activities, educational status of women and their children, accessibility to all kinds of infrastructural activities, improved decision making capacity in all important aspects, knowledge and use of financial services shows positive changes in the socio-economic status of tribal women in Mandwai R.D.Block. This improvement has not taken place overnight. Financial inclusion philosophy definitely will play a very important role in this respect. Self Help Groups are emerging on a very large scale in that block. It is noteworthy that I must recommend emphasize investment in tribal women's education, vocational training, meaningful participation of tribal women in local self government bodies, anti alcohol efforts and prevention of domestic violence among tribal families through collective efforts and social intervention. In my words financial inclusion is the inevitable prerequisites of all kinds of empowerment like economic, political, social, and cultural. So, financial inclusion is not an option to the women but it is a compulsion for their all round growth and development.

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Empowerment of Tribal Women in Tripura

Dr. Swapna Biswas

Introduction :

Tripura is a small state in North-East India with a population of 36,71,032 people according to census report 2011. Out of this population 0.83 million are tribals who live in the interior parts of the state in the hills. In terms of literacy 87.75% (male 92.18%, female 83.15%) of the population has been returned as literature in the same census of 2011. Among the tribals (total population 9.93,426), only 63% are literate and most of them are Kokborok speaking. The low rate of tribal literacy is due to several factors, the chief among them being their poor economic condition and limitation in their access to education. Economically the tribal population of Tripura may be classified into broad groups of settled cultivators and shifting (known as Jhum) cultivators. In the last few decades, their economic activities have shown commendable changes following an increased tendency of the educated section to seek employment industries and in the public sector. Women's education is given considerable importance. Their participation in activities of better quality of life band improved standard of living.

Tripura tribals have provided a place of considerable

socio-economic importance to their womenfolk. Women of north-east India reveal that like all hill women, they are physically and socially compelled to lead a life of extreme hardship. We need to look into the impact of modernization and development on tribal society of Tripura in general and tribal women in particular. Let us now analyze the impact of major socio-economic changes on the life and status of tribal women in Tripura.

The Present Theme: The present study aims to analyze the socio-economic status and the changing occupational patterns of the Tribal women in Tripura. From the Census Report of 1991, 2001 and 2011, it is evident that Tribal people have been coming out of their traditional jhum economy to participate in a number of works like Govt. service, Industry, Trade, Transport etc. which they did not do before. In this study, the three major factors behind the change has been identified literacy, reservation policy and cultivable variables. We find that the literacy rate among the Tribal of Tripura increased from 27.4% in 1991, to 44.6% in 2001 and 56.21% in 2011.

Women's studies and Tribal studies have been identified as important areas of research in the social science by the Indian Council of social Science Research (ICSSR).Indeed ,tribe specific and gender specific are as important as region specific and area specific studies if we look at the problems from the angle of human development. This is particularly true of the North Eastern Region where one must make distinction between area and development of its disadvantaged people.

The tribals of Tripura are almost rural people. According to 1991 Census 98.35 percent of the total tribal population of the state live in rural areas. Census reports also show that the

rate of economic participation of the tribal women of rural areas is higher than that of the tribal woman of urban areas of Tripura. Now a days occupational pattern of tribal population has changed and literacy rate has increased. Specially tribal women are advanced in education, occupation, industry, trade and commerce, transport, communication etc.

A large number of tribals including women have access into the Government sector. The third factor behind the improvement is consequent upon the shift from traditional crop cultivation to rubber plantation. It has given an immense economic boost to tribal families that have traditionally occupied large landholdings. There is a strong view that engagement in household work also implies significant contribution to real income and welfare of the family, and the hour spend on household activities should therefore be included in hours of productive work. It is beyond any doubt that women have been making invaluable contribution to welfare of their families almost everywhere at the cost of their labour in household activities.

While defining economic participation we have taken the idea used in 1991 census which is defined as "Participation in any economically productive activity. Such participation may be physical or mental in nature .Work involves not only actual work but also effective supervision and direction of work. It also includes work on farm and family enterprise."

The NGOs are being associated in implementation of various components of the rubber based projects. The continuous presence of the NGOs in the project is very helpful in terms of ensuring a linkage between the implementing Govt. agency and target group.

Methodology :

The sources of information were collected from various books, articles, journals, reports and websites etc. Other official statistics and information were obtained from various institutions and organizations like Tribal Welfare Department, Govt. of Tripura, Social Welfare Dept. Govt. of Tripura, Tribal Research Institute, Govt. of Tripura. In the case of primary data, the method of participant observation was followed. Most of information regarding the socio-economic status of tribal women, levels of works etc. were acquired from official records, recommendations of NPE 1986 and estimated by the officials.

Objectives of the present study :

1. To study the socio economic status of tribal women in Tripura
2. To analyse the participation of tribal women in political activities of this state.

Socio economic status of tribal women in Tripura :

In tribal society it is found that women are characterized by high incidence of literacy and perhaps this is one of the reasons of their low availability of employment opportunities in other services.

Education is very important in promoting upward social mobility . People with higher levels of education generally get good opportunities for social mobility - say, for getting better jobs, earning more money and maintaining a better life-style. On the other hand, social mobility of people may be restricted in absence of proper educational qualification. Urbanisation, more precisely migration of people from rural to urban, is also a measure of social mobility. Urban areas have become cen-

ters for industrial and business establishments and are providing improved and more satisfactory standard of life.

Tribal women in general are much more vulnerable to such socialization. The educational disparity as exists in between men and women over the decades 1961-81 have been shown in Table 1.1 (tribal literacy vs non-tribal literacy). It also appears although the trend of female literacy is on the increase over the decades, considerable disparity in the rates of literacy in between tribal and non-tribal women exists in the society. Women, too face discrimination in the occupational field and find it extremely difficult to advance in social status except the status they gain from their husband. They are primarily placed in the job that require lower skills, less education and lesser pay. Again the insecurity of many women's position makes them vulnerable to salary discrimination and low ceiling on advancement of opportunities. A comparative study in respect of social mobility chances in between tribal and non-tribal women will again indicate that tribal women face serious discrimination in comparison to non-tribal women in Tripura.

Data and it's Interpretation :

Table 1.1 : Tribal Literacy as Compared to Non-tribal Literacy in Tripura

Year	Percentage of literates to the tribal population			Percentage of literates to the non-tribal population		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1981	33.46	12.27	23.07	57.33	39.33	48.73
1991	43.56	18.39	30.86	68.43	45.53	56.98
2001	53.46	24.29	38.86	79.33	51.44	65.38

Source : Census Report : 1981, 1991, 2001

The table depicting trend of tribal literacy as compared to literacy of non-tribals and the total population in Tripura.

Table 1.2 : Tripura's Demographic Change : 1981-2011

Year	Total Population	Tribal Population	Percentage of tribal Total Population
1981	20,53058	5,83,920	28.44
1991	27,57205	8,53,345	30.95
2001	32,00000	9,9,200	31%
2011	36,71032	11,66,813	31.76

Source : Census Report : 1981, 1991, 2001

It shows that the growth rate of population in Tripura has maintained more or less a steady trend since the beginning of this century.

Table 1.3:Restricted Mobility of Tribal Women in Respect of Labour, Cultivation Literacy etc., as in 1981, 1991, 2001, 2011

Year	Characteristics	Women of Tripura	Tribal Women	Non-tribal Women
1981	Women Labourers	28,634 (2.8%)	20,268 (7.8%)	8,048 (1.13%)
1991	Women Cultivators	34,174 (3.4%)	30,408 (10.6%)	3,766 (0.52%)
2001	Women other workers	24,299 (2.43%)	3,172 (1.11%)	21,107 (2.96%)
2011	Women literacy	3,19,398 (32%)	35,126 (12.27%)	2,84,272 (39.93%)

Source : Census Report : 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2012

In 1981, the literacy of tribal women was only 12.27 percent as against 39.93 percent of non-tribal women literacy. The percentage of tribal women as unskilled labourers and cultivators are on higher side (7.8 and 10.6 respectively). Again the percentage of OW (the other worker) which help in increasing social status much lower (1.11%) for the tribal women than that of non-tribal women. So the facts in the above table are indicators of relatively low social mobility of tribal women. At present there is a tendancy of increasing the above percentage of tribal and non-tribal labourers and cultivators.

Table 1.4 : Percentage of Workers to total Tribal Male and total Female population in 1981, 1991, 2001 Tripura

Year	Total		Rural		Urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1981	54.13	27.86	54.27	28.06	44.69	10.96
1991	45.93	25.32	45.89	25.45	47.5	16.47
2001	40.87	20.52	40.97	20.51	40.17	10.56

Source : Census Report : 1981, 1991, 2001

It is evident from the table that the work participation rate of tribal women is not very much lower.

Table 1.5 : Proportion (percentage) of workers among general Males and Females, Tribal Males and Females and Non-Tribal Males and Females in 1981, 1991, 2001 Tripura

Year	General (Tribal + Non-Tribal)		Tribal		Non-Tribal	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1981	50.71	12.77	54.13	27.85	49.36	6.71
1991	47.56	13.76	45.92	25.32	47.81	8.5
2001 (Approx)	45.59	10.67	40.89	20.43	40.85	5.7

Source : Census Report : 1981, 1991, 2001

The table indicates that in the tribal society the number of working women may be less that of the men but in this respect they are better of than their counter parts in the non-tribal society of the state among which women are economically more dependent on men.

Table 1.6 : Proportion (percentage) of workers among Tribal Females and Non-Tribal Females in 1981, 1991, 2001 Tripura

Year	Total		Rural		Urban	
	Tribal	Non-Tribal	Tribal	Non-Tribal	Tribal	Non-Tribal
1981	27.86	6.71	28.06	6.37	10.96	7.81
1991	25.32	8.5	25.45	8.35	16.47	9.03
2001 (Approx)	23.39	10.8	23.56	10.39	22.53	11.08

Source : Census Report : 1981, 1991, 2001

This table is evident that the economic participation of tribal women is much higher than that of their non-tribal counterparts in Tripura. Till today it is found that the level of participation rate of non-tribal women is lower vis-à-vis that of tribal women.

Participation of ST Women in Political Activities :

The first in assessing the equal participation of women and men in political life is to focus on the issue of increasing the number of women in decision-making positions. Given the importance of national legislatures, the expert group focused on the processes, factors and mechanisms by which women gain entry into elected offices in legislative bodies. They then assessed the mechanisms that operate to enable women to achieve increased levels of representation.

Women and Electoral politics in Tripura

Tripura a small state of north-east India which have various political system. It has state legislative assembly with 60 seats and 2 seats for Loksabha and 1 for Rajyasabha. It also has a 3 tier Panchayatiraj system with 33% reservation for women. It also has Tribal Autonomous District Council for tribal people. So, Tripura is a very unique place for study of political systems and women's participation in it. It also has Tribal Autonomous District Council for tribal people. So, Tripura is a very unique place for study of political systems and women's participation in it. I am trying to find out the women's participation in all those political systems in the following tables :-

Analyzing Data

After the incorporation of the 73rd amendment act, the

tribals got a major boost to take their share in the panchayat system in Tripura. On the 20th anniversary of the implementation of the Tripura Panchayats Act-1993., after conducting four elections, now it is very important to identify the exact position of the tribal women in the three tier panchayat system in Tripura.

After the implementation of the Tripura Panchayat Acts-1993, as per the provisions of the act, the first panchayat election was conducted in 1994 at the three levels of the panchayat system i.e. gram panchayat, panchayat samiti and zilla parishad

Tabale-2.1

Elected Members in Gram Panchayat

Year	Total Seats	ST		ST	Pecentage	Pecentage	
		Male	Female	Total		Male	Female
1994	5427	415	289	704	13%	7.64%	5.32%
1999	5685	157	129	286	5%	2.76%	2.27%
2004	5352	168	123	291	6%	3.14%	2.30%
2009	5259	187	103	290	6%	3.56%	1.96%
2014	6111	181	190	371	6.07%	2.96%	3.11%

Source : Dept. Of Panchayat, Govt. of Tripura

Table 2.1 represents the tribals participation in Gram Panchayat in Tripura. In 1994, for the first time, election for the three tier panchayats was conducted. There were 525 gram Panchayats comprising 5427 members. A total no.of 704 seats (13%) were occupied by the tribal people. Tribal women occupied 5.32% seats out of 13% were occupied by the tribal people. Tribal women occupied 5.32% seats out of 13% in 1994, 2.27% out of 5% in 1992, 2.30% out of 6% in 2004 and 1.96% out of 6% in 2009, 3.11% out of 6.07% in 2014.

Tabale-2.2

Elected Members in Panchayat Samiti

Year	Total Seats	ST		ST	Pecentage	Pecentage	
		Male	Female	Total		Male	Female
1994	196	13	13	26	13%	6.63%	6.63%
1999	299	15	11	26	5%	5.02%	3.68%
2004	299	10	5	15	6%	3.34%	1.67%
2009	299	5	10	15	6%	1.67%	3.34%
2014	419	9	18	27	6.44%	2.15%	4.30%

Source : Dept. Of Panchayat, Govt. of Tripura

Table no.-2.2 depicts the tribals' participation in panchayat samiti. In case of the election of Panchayat Samiti Tribal Women occupied 13 seats out of total 26 total no. of ST seats in 1994, 11 seats out of 26 in 1999, 05 seats out of 15 in 2004, 10 seats out of 15 in 2009 and 18 seats out of 27.

Tabale-2.3

Elected Members in Zilla Parishads

Year	Total Seats	ST		ST	Pecentage	Pecentage	
		Male	Female	Total		Male	Female
1994	70	3	4	7	10%	4.26%	5.71%
1999	82	4	2	6	7%	4.88%	2.44%
2004	82.	1	3	4	5%	1.22%	3.66%
2009	82	3	1	4	5%	3.66%	1.22%
2014	116	2	5	7	6.03%	1.72%	4.31%

Source : Dept. Of Panchayat, Govt. of Tripura

Table no. 2.3 represents the tribal women's participation in Zilla Parishads in Tripura. In case of the election of the highest tier of the panchayatiraj system i.e. zilla parishads the tribal women are not far behind in participating than the non-tribals.

Tabale-2.4

Elected Chairpersons in Gram Panchayat

Year	Total Seats	ST		ST	Pecentage	Pecentage	
		Male	Female	Total		Male	Female
1994	525	111	55	166	32%	21.14	10.48%
1999	537	41	31	72	13%	7.64	5.77%
2004	513	13	13	26	5%	2.53	2.53%
2009	511	19	7	26	5%	3.72	1.37%
2014	591	15	16	31	5.25%	2.54%	2.72%

Source : Dept. Of Panchayat, Govt. of Tripura

Table 2.4 shows the elected tribal women chairpersons in gram panchayats in Tripura. After the incorporation of the Tripura panchayats Act, the tribal women are also taking leading position in the organizational framework of panchayatiraj system in Tripura.

Tabale-2.5

Elected Chairperson in Panchayat Samiti

Year	Total Seats	ST		ST	Pecentage	Pecentage	
		Male	Female	Total		Male	Female
1994	16	2	1	3	31%	12.5%	6.25%
1999	23	3	1	4	21%	13.04%	4.35%
2004	23	1	0	1	4%	4.35%	0
2009	23	0	1	1	4%	0	4.35%
2014	35	1	1	2	5.71%	2.86%	2.86%

Source : Dept. Of Panchayat, Govt. of Tripura

Table no. 2.5 represents the elected tribal women chairpersons in panchayat samities. The Tribal women occupied 6.25% seats out of 31% Tribal seats in 1994, 4.35% out of 21% in 1999, 4.35% out of 4% in 2009 and 2.86% out of 5.71% in 2014. So, from this table we see that Tribal Women have been elected as Chairperson in Panchayat Samiti during the period 1994 to 2014 in Tripura.

Tabale-2.6

Elected Chairpersons in Zilla Parishads

Year	Total Seats	ST		ST	Pecentage	Pecentage	
		Male	Female	Total		Male	Female
1994	3	0	1	1	33%	0	33.33
1999	4	0	1	1	25%	0	25
2004	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
2009	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
2014	8	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source : Dept. Of Panchayat, Govt. of Tripura

Table no. 2.6 represented the tribal chairpersons in zilla parishads. It is revealed that though initially tribal chairpersons were in zilla parishads, but after election of the year 2004, 2009 and 2014 no tribal chairperson are seen in zilla parishads. Till now, only 2 members from the tribal women could hold the office of chairperson. It is really a matter of great concern. From mentioned tables we can say that ST women's participation in all political system is very satisfactory in our state. I hope in future the trend of participation of Tribal women in political system will be increased. It is a good message for Tribal Women.

From mentioned tables we can say that ST women's participation in all political system is very satisfactory in our state. I hope in future the trend of participation of Tribal women in political system will be increased. It is a very good message for Tribal Women.

Findings & Conclusions :

The changes cited in the economic and socio cultural systems of the Tripura tribals clearly suggest a certain dualism

in the life pattern of men and women among the tribals in general, and urban and rural tribal women in particular. The benefits of state sponsored development have been concentrated particularly among the educated and urban tribal elites. Under demongraphic compulsion, rural natives and traditional subsistence economy of the tribals, gender disparity was a marginal possibility, although they mostly followed the Hindu tradition of particularly. But today, development has contributed to heightend disparities along gender, class and space lines.

Most of the SC and ST Communities are still striving to fulfill their basic needs of food,clothing and shelter. Besides these, today they require better opportunities to live in dignity and self-respect. Hence, ample opportunities should be made available to them, which would ensure them a secured and dignified life in this 21st Century.

Among both tribal men and tribal women workers share of employment in services is very small and it is smaller among tribal women than among tribal men although both of them have made some gain in this respect during the decades 1981 and 2001. This indicates that the expansion of avenues of paid and secured employment is not shared equally by tribal man and tribal women are characterized by high incidence of illiteracy and perhaps this is one of the reasons of their low availability of employment opportunities in 'other services'.

From the representation of the political participation of the tribals in Tripura it can be said that the share of the tribals in each of the three tier panchayatiraj system is fluctuating. It is only the attempt to fulfill the reservation criteria provided by the Tripura Panchayats Act 1993. However, the 73rd amendment and the tribal's movement have led to motivating large

number of the tribal candidates to contest the local elections. Their entry at the grassroots level democratic institutions is a positive indicator of change in the socio-political dynamics of rural society.

It is revealed that tribal women are also not far behind in participating in the political activities. They are also coming forward with their male folk and taking part in decision making process actively. So, this is clear indication of the tribal women towards empowerment through panchayatiraj system. The panchayatiraj has provided a common forum for social, economic, political and legal advancement of the tribal population. This can be considered as the greatest event for tribal women empowerment.

The study shows that the tribal women are yet to be mobilized in Tripura. The need and orientation has, therefore, become urgent and necessary especially in view of the socio-economic conditions of the tribal women. Constitutional provisions, government policies, social action, establishment of social safetyness and awareness of the rural tribals together should be able to provide the tribals with necessary skills to enjoy equal opportunity and thereby enhance the status of the tribals of Tripura through political empowerment.

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Status and Empowerment of Tribal Women of Tripura Pre-Period and Post-Period of Merging with India : A hope for the Mission

Monoranjan Das

Introduction

Women are known as the 'better half only' since a family circle cannot get a proper shape in absence of them as well as a success human society can be built with the help of independent and empowered women. As the family is a two wheeler car; one wheel is man and another one is woman. Any kind of outstanding action can be done jointly with the help of man and women. In this context, Kazi Najrul Islam said, "Bishwer ja kichu kalyankar tar ardhek sristi kariyache naree aar ardhek kariyache nor." (Women have created the half portion and rest portion by man that are good in the world). It is widely acknowledged that one cannot expect women empowerment and sex equity unless women have a share in the decision making process inside and outside domestic atmosphere. Therefore, the family, village, socio-economic, political, educational and cultural intuitions as well as the State should provide the rights and opportunities; enabling to access it by the women. The independent and authorized women are the empowered women. All the tribal women are also required to be empowered for real socio-economic development in Tripura. So, empowerment of tribal women has emerged as an important issue. Empowerment of

women means the equal status of women in opportunity and freedom to develop them with their male counterpart. The focus of empowerments are equipping the women to be educated, economically independent, self reliant, have a positive self esteem to enable them to face any difficult situation and they should be able to participate in the process of decision making. Over the periods, women are victims of discriminations in gender justice, sexual separation of labour, access to education, proper nutrition, employment opportunities, health care, dowry, child marriage, and rape, abuse, domestic violence, killing etc. against women are the ill motive practices to undermine the status of women in our society. Tribal women of Tripura are also not escaping from these bad practices prevail in our society. Accordingly, the empowerment issue of tribal women of Tripura cannot be ignored. So, Socio-economic, political and educational empowerment of tribal women is required for real upliftment in society. Educational and economic developments are two fundamental factors that have changed the complete scenario of social and cultural atmosphere of tribal society. Women empowerment has catalytic outcome in rustic civilization, strengthening their mood and motive as well as voice in the social order, forcing interest on human improvement issues of infant education, physical fitness and sex precedence.

The Government of Tripura reserved 50% seats in 3-tier panchayet for women prioritizing as a significant step towards their political and socio-economic empowerment. Tribal women's empowerment usually has some components like- women's sense of self worth, their right to have and determine choices, their right to have access to opportunities and recourse,

right to have power to control their lives both inside and outside of domestic atmosphere and ability to influence the direction of social change to create a justice, social economic order-universally.

Objectives

ò To find out the status and empowerment of tribal women of Tripura in the fields of socio-economic, political, educational and cultural.

ò To find out problems to get the equal status and empowerment with counterpart male.

ò To find out suggestive measures to solving the increasing problems.

Method

Descriptive and conceptual method was used in the study along with quantitative and qualitative approaches on the analytical practical aspects.

Educational Empowerment

i) Pre-Period of Statehood

Under the patriarchal system, tribal women were not able to come out from inside of domestic atmosphere to get education. Education for women was a far crying event in tribal society. It was deepened on the gender discrimination. There was very much encouragement for male children in the families with opportunities that were created for the male children to grow into a successful social being, on the other hand, female children were made to look for the opportunities to knock at her as simultaneously a male child is permitted to nurture liberally as he is seen as the one to meet the challenges facing the tribal society. However, in the tribal society, Janasikha Samity (1945) did yeomen service for education to common

tribal citizens; first in its kind in India. This Samity had attempted for their educational consciousness and enlightenment. Since; socio-economic, political and cultural improvement can be only possible by common education. This Samity provoked the logic among tribal citizens a zeal for education. Therefore, Janasikha Samity movement was the most important milestone for education of tribal women. Beside this; Kumari, Rupasri and Madhuti were also struggled (1948) against Titun Custom of Royal Court to)conscious and enlighten the tribal women in Tripura) make the tribal women of Tripura Conscious & enlightened.

ii) Post- Period Of Statehood

Education is not only a way to the improvement of the tribal people, their all round socio-economiç, political and cultural progressive development but also the means of constituents for ensuring the empowerment of tribal women of Tripura. The successful journey of education had started in from 1979. Basically, The state Government had taken massive initiative in education for common people. As per 2011 census, 3,52,734(45%) tribal women are literate out of 7, 83,770 literate tribal in Tripura.

As per State Government academic record (2014), 47.81% women population contribute to share the achievement of 96.86% literate people in Tripura. Sakharata Mission (1990), SSA (2001-02) and KGBV,(2004) Rastriya Madhyamik Shikha Abhiyan (2008-09) RUSA, CCE (2014-15) programs had been introduced by State Government with attaching highest priority for improvement of girls' education in Tripura. Especially, these programs are dynamically going on seven Rural Development Blocks under North Tripura, Dhalai, South Tripura Dis-

tricts which are basically tribal dominated. At this time, literacy rate of tribal women (80.6%) in these blocks is higher than national rate (47.13%) which was lower in 2011cnsus and gender gap in literacy was above the national average (21.67%). In the SSA, some important innovative schemes have been introduced in augmenting of general improvement of tribal girls' education in these blocks having tribal population. In Tripura, National Programme for Educational of Girls at Elementary Level scheme was introduced (2005-2006) primarily in two Educationally Backwards Blocks (EBB) under Dhalai district and five more EBBs were taken(2006-2007) under the coverage of NPEGELS. The State Government of Tripura has been taken strong constructive role (1993) for free education program up to general Degree level to get illiteracy free and drop-out less State and making empowered women in society. The State of Government of Tripura allocated highest budgets in the year of 2015 (19.54%) for education among all states in India. As a result, Tripura had reached second position (96.82%) in literacy rate in India (64.8%).

Economic Empowerment

i) Pre-Period of Statehood

In Tripura, from ancient period, tribal women's economic empowerment was an essential factor of brawny economic development. Empowerment of women boosted their aptitude to influence to transform and construct an improved society. Tribal women principally choose on food preparation and men make for the financial decision. But they are having equal status for decision creating in the sector of food processing and distributing, hill and valley harvesting, firewood collections.

ii) Post-Period of Statehood

Many eminent thinkers including Amartya Sen strongly advocated that economic freedom alone can ensure the real empowerment for women. The economic organization of tribal women of Tripura is not different from the primitive groups of the parts of the India. They are engaged in small scale entrepreneurship programs including men with the help of the self-help groups. They are having equal status for servicing; marketing, shopping, self help grouping have paved the path for economic independence of tribal women. After that, contribution to the national economic of tribal women is fairly noticeable in Tripura. Rubber plantation, Agriculture, Forest Patta land, MNREGA, some of cases Government and Non-Government jobs helps the tribal women to he empowered and to strengthen their economic lifestyle. Now, Rubber is one of the money-making objects in Tripura that is realized by tribal of Tripura especially tribal women, since the largest part of the hilly area holders is tribal people. In the beginning of Rubber Plantation planning, Tripura State Government effectively could motivate the tribal people to cultivate the Rubber through Rubber Plantation Board. In the Rubber cultivation, tribal women are getting full power from the collection of latex and tough scrap to sale in market which helps them to get genuine economic empowerment. So, the financial benefit's position of Rubber plantation cultivation of Tripura (98.65%) is second in India. Recently, the Tripura State Government is introduced to different vacation based on life skill development activities like Woolen Weaving, Tailoring, Bamboo Cane Craft, Jute Product, Toy, Agarbati making, computer training, electronic repair training, ITI training etc. from primary to upper primary for tribal

girls' and others students. The aims of these initiatives are to building up self confidence among female students. In these processes, many tribal women along with non-tribal women have been benefited a lot by the vocation based life skill training program and they are joined in government and non government works for getting economic empowerment.

Political Empowerment

i) Pre-Period of Statehood

The Political movement had started during the first four decades of nineteenth century in Tripura. At that time, the aggressive struggle was going on for freedom overall India. Simultaneously the internal struggle was also started for socio-political and economic life of the Tribes of hilly Tripura. The most conspicuous among them were the Kuki revolt (1826-60) against feudal exploitation, the Jamatia revolt (1863) against coolie labour, and the Reang rebellion (1939-45) against exploitation and torture by tribal headman as well as unequal taxation system introduced by Maharaja Bir Bikram Manikya. The Reang rebellion took place at a time when the tribes faced a chronic food shortage problem. During the late 1930s and the 1940s, the state also witnessed the formation of several socio-political organisations like Jana Mongal Samiti (hereafter JMS), Janashiskya Samiti (hereafter JSS), Tripura Proja Mondal (hereafter TPM) and Tripura Rajya Gana Mukti Parishad (hereafter TRGMP). JMS was formed in 1936, mainly by a group of Agartala based Bengali professionals, to achieve the objective of 'full responsible Government' under the aegis of the monarch. The founder of TripuraCommunism, Biren Dutta, held a very important position within JMS, and a strong Communist influence was evident in its socio-economic and political

programmes (Bhattacharyya 1990:2211).

In 1942, Reang community, among the tribal of Tripura, had started revolt under the unquestionable leadership of Ratanmoni against the royal court. Notwithstanding a feudalistic-colonial rule, Tripura faced no major disturbance excluding the Reang Revolt of 1942-43, which was directed essentially against the ruling monarch. Due to direct influence of India's freedom movement which began to penetrate the plains of Twipra / Tipperah from the first half of the 20th century, new socio-political movements soon emerged. Eventually, there emerged a number of socio-political organizations, which soon demanded for the immediate democratization of Twipra's political system and establishment of responsible government.

After this, in 1945, Janasikha Samity was constituted at Durga Choudhury Para, Jirania Sub-Division under West Tripura under chairmanship of Sudhnya Debbarma . The motto of this Samity was yeomen service to illiterate Kokborok speaking tribal people who in miserable conditions owing to curse of illiteracy and thus it paved away for spreading light of education among Kokborok speaking distressful tribal people living in remote hilly impassable terrain. Janasikha Samiti wed a play very important role in the state of Tripura where tribal found an ample opportunity to become the voice of the movement which started for the spread of educational and political consciousness and against poverty in Tripura. The use of the word 'Michhil'(marching) in Kokborok song does testify this fact. Hence, Janasikha Samity took a massive effort to popularize education and political consciousness among the common people in Tripura. Just then we come across a Kokborok song an under "nini numale balonga thangkha nini nuphale mishhil o

thangkha takabdi takabdi o mwnai o" (Your mother is now in forests, your father is marching with the mass, so beloved child! Do not cry please.) In that time, Mahindra Debbarma published "Yapri" (Marching). As a result, tribal people especially tribal women had stimulated to political activities.

In the meantime (on 28th March, 1948), Madhuti and Rupasree and Kumari were resisted against Tithun Custom (labouring without pay) of ruler Kanchaprabha and were martyred by projectile of military regiment. Further in 1949(on 9th October), man and women, Hindu and Muslim all hungry human beings were resisted against brutal attack of Hari saha ;landlord and police and 6(six) tribal farmers along with 1(one) Bengali Muslim farmer fighters were shot dead by the police on 9th October 1949 in Golaghati under Bishalghar Sub-Division. There raised a blizzard of protest all over whole Tripura against this barbarous attack of the police on the farmers. There was wide spread discontentment among the farmers, especially among the tribal men and women farmers and this agitation was spread throughout whole Tripura. In Golaghati itself, the Government had to enforce an extensive torture to curb down the first mass movement of the poor and the exploited people. Again, in 1966-1969, tribal women were started struggle against heartless forest ruling under the leaderships of Laxmi Bisheswari Jamatia, Agore Debbarma, Brajamohan Jamatia (Birchandra Manu), Jaishtya Laxmi Murasing, Sagankanya Murasing, Akhil Chandra Murasing, (Patichari), Malati Debberma, Gour Hari Debbarma (Lalmira), Mohini Tripura (Matai, Belonia), Dhananjay Tripura (Jolaibari), and Jagatmoni Naotia(Garjee-Udaipur). In Belonia, at peaceful Marchpass (Michhil), Mohini Tripura was martyred by forester S.P. Paul's

bullet. In these political fights, tribal women were in leading position and basically these political movements had participated by peaceful and conscious tribal women of Tripura against Royal Court.

ii) Post-Period of Statehood

After prolonged strong struggle, in 1979, people of Tripura had formed a democratize Government. Consequently, Tribal people had won their socio-economic, political and cultural rights. The Government of Tripura reserved 50% seats in 3-tier panchayet for women prioritizing as a significant step towards their political and socio-economic empowerment. The political field in Tripura, they had come out from their conventional and wariness atmosphere and had got chances in the decision making bodies. In 1983 Assembly Election, Bibhu Kumara Devi as first tribal woman was elected as MLA from Matabari Constituency and in 1988, from Agartala constituency and first Tribal Woman MP (1991) of Tripura from East Tripura Lok-Sabha Constituency. Kartick Kanya Debbarma (1993), Bijanti Kolai(1998) were elected as MLA from Takajalsa and Sadhyarani Debbarma (1998) from Assssarambari. Sandhya Chakma is also elected MDC (2005-2015) from ADC, Pachertal Constituency and she is doing duty as an executive member in social education. Bibhu Kumari Devi and Kartick Kanya Debberma respectively had got 1st Minister (1988-Samabhaya) and 2nd Minister (1993-Social Welfare) from Tribal Women in Tripura. State Government has taken a decision (2007) for 50% reservation for women and implemented in Tri- stage Panchayate. As a result, Anjali Debberma (2008) is first Tribal women who got Sabhatipati from North Tripura Zila Prasad. Bhupenswari Debberma (2005) was first tribal

Women Vice chairperson of AMC.

Socio cum Administrative Empowerment

i) Pre-Period of Statehood

The tribal women of Tripura were presented their abilities in various fields after getting their educational, socio-economical, political, and cultural right in pre-merging period of Tripura with India. Smt. Ananga Mohani Devi, was first tribal poet in Tripura who had presented 'Kanika', 'Shokgatha', and 'Priti', Smt. Mrinalini Devi had offered some precious books, Girindra Bala Devi was printed first news paper 'Rabi'. Kumari Kamal Prabha Devi had written many volumes which include ' Nutan Surya', 'Khelaghar', 'Kollal', 'Alo-Chaya', 'Tripurar anta Purar Smriti Khatha', 'Suryatapa', 'Swapan Kohali', 'Koharan' and 'Parbati'. 'Antapurar Smriti katha' printed in the newspaper 'Basumati' in West Bengal and Smt. Hara rani Devi was other outstanding tribal essayist in Royal Tripura.

ii) Post-Period of Statehood

Tribal women are proving their talent with doing duty in their own non-traditional fields like, Karabi Debbarma was first principal, Basana Debberma was first Head Mistress, Bithika Debbarma was first TPSC Member. Tanusree Debbarma is first IAS, who is doing administration work. Jogamaya Chakma is first Deputy Director who is working in School Education. Sobha Debbarma is first Inspector of Colleges, working in Tripura Central University. Panchali Debberma is first doctor, working in IGM hospital. Hamari Jamatia is first Mass Communication passed Tribal Women from Tripura, working in Delhi as a journalist. A large numbers of head mistresses, doctors and nurses are doing as tribal women. Sova Debberma, Banani Debbarma and Manidipa Debbarma also had got principal ship. Smt.

Manidipa Debbarma is among them who is working in Women's College. Minakumar Debbarma, Olivia Debbarma, Susmita Debbarma and Koyal Debbarma are doing their duty as Deputy Superintendent of police in Tripura.They are successful in their specific fields. Sourabhi Debbarma is first Indian Idol Prize winner, Panchali Debbarma and Karabi Debbarma are well-known tribal women author, Mira Debbarma was film Singar, Jharna Debbarma, Nazrul Sangit Singer, Tithi Debbarma, Rabindra Sangit Singer. They all are belonging to either educated or bureaucratic family except Magalewari Debbarma, Kokborok writer and Sadana Reang, Kokborok singer-dancer of jhumia family.

After prolonged discussion, we have got acknowledged that all legendary and renowned tribal women of Tripura are belonging to overgenerous, educated and economically; some cases in politically strong bureaucratic family.Thus,we may say education is needful for empowerment and getting a well-known status among tribal women of Tripura. So, Ambedkar said, "Educate! Organize! Agitate!" Therefore, they are coming out with confidence from domestic situation. They are having healthier social status in no dishonor of widow life, freedom of divorce, remarriage and earns for economic independence. Nevertheless, tribal women are getting not as much of remuneration on the same job than her biological opposite counterparts. Tribal woman are getting their equal economic right by MNREGA Programme. But this facilities are not available in all blocks not only Tripura but also overall India. However, the worth of women in tribal families is extraordinarily significant, since their economy depend on their hard labour.

Chief Problems for Empowerment of Tribal Women of Tripura

From the beginning, women are subjugated in patriarchal society in Tripura. So, the lack of proper education among tribal women is the main obstacle in securing power and establishing the authority. Thus, low level literacy rate is the most prevalent dilemma for progress of economic progressive development in several areas. There are many lives in hilly native village areas and who are not able to come out with confidence and are not willing to take up mixed customs which can help them to get high status and empowerment.

Conclusion

Patriarchy should not be provided all kinds of freedom to females; by keeping them engaged in commendable pursuits, they should keep them under their own authority. Sex discrimination in education and socio-economic and political field is the chief hurdle for getting their right in decision making; hilly areas is not suitable for cultivation, communication and for any sort of earning for economic empowerment. Due to shortage of medium of instruction tribal women are not getting comfortable environment in all fields. The progress of empowerment for tribal women is slowly but steadily progressing. Pleasurable news is, State Government has been taken some constructive programs like proper distribution of stipends in school, make sure the less dropout, newly established hostels along with residential schools especially for tribal girls, to arrange different awareness program with modern technique in all fields, ensues 50% reservation in tri-type panchayat sectors. However, lastly the researcher needs to say that empowerment of tribal women of Tripura is better than overall India. After

getting empowerment, they are coming out with dignity from homely atmosphere to marching with mass. They are building noteworthy contributions in the sectors of education, culture, economies, social, political, literature, defiance etc. though the magnitude of them is not as much of. Nevertheless, their participance is very needful to build up a triumphant society. For Swami Vivekananda, "All nations have attained greatness by paying proper respect to women. That country and that nation which do not respect woman have never become great, nor will ever be in future."

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A Study onf the Overall Situatuion of Tribal Women, Especially in the State of Tripura

Mahua Choudhury

Abstract

Tripura is an integral part of North-East India where natural beauty joins hands with a vibrating culture. Tripura was a princely state rich in its own ancient cultural heritage and merged with Indian union on 15th October, 1949. Like history of other Nations of the World, the history of Tripura is a dialectical movement. The tribals are concentrated mostly in the central belt of India and parts of the North-East. This article focuses on the nature and dimensions of changes in the lives and status of tribal women in Tripura. Rural tribal women stand marginalised in the growing modern economy of the state. Socio-economic changes during the last few decades have introduced new gender and class issues into the purportedly egalitarian society of the tribal. The status of a person quite often depends on the system of authority he/she enjoys in the community. In tribal communities women are working hard and considered to be assets. Women continued to play a significant role. Role of women is not only of importance in economic activities, but her role in non-economic activities is equally important. Health of the tribal women is more important. Problems associated with education of tribal women needs

immediate attention and early resolution. Tribal women need to face lots of challenges in the society. Skills training, increased growth, productivity and innovation, in particular for the informal sector are linked with poverty re-education. In the present study we make an effort to understand the variety, the changes that have occurred among them and the evolution of their customary law in response to them. The status of women in a society is a significant reflection of the level of social justice in that society. Women's status is often described in terms of their level of income, employment, education, health and fertility as well as their roles within the family, the community and society. In tribal communities, the role of women is substantial and crucial. They constitute about half the total population but in tribal society women are more important than in other social groups, because they work harder and the family economy and management depends on them. In this paper, an attempt has been made to analyse the educational status of tribal women. The present paper is a descriptive research work. The study revealed that rural tribal women are devoid of modern facilities like education, electricity, proper drinking water health care, ample transportation, etc. Though urban tribal women have lost some of their traditional rights, the gains they have made in the spheres of education, employment or personal mobility are significant compared to rural tribal women.

Keywords: Tribal, Society, Education.

Introduction:

Today education is a powerful agent of social change. It unlocks the door to modernisation. It also paves a sure road to economic modernisation and progress. Education to women

is as essential as to men. It makes women to find the right way to development. India can proudly be called the largest "tribal" population in the world. The scheduled tribes in India constituted 8.2 percent of India`s population according to 2001 census (Erni et.al., 2001). Northeast India is the homeland of a large number of tribes. There are about 145 tribal communities of which 78 are large each with a population of more than 5000. They constitute around 12 per cent of the total tribal population of India and 25.81 per cent of the total population of North-East India (Ali et. al.,2003). Tripura, a small state in the North Eastern Region of the country is inhabited by about 32 lakhs people of whom 31 percent belong to the tribal communities. It is generally believed that the word "Tripura" originated from the word "Tripura Sundari" which is the name of a sacred deity of Tripura. There is another belief that 'Tripura' was earlier known as "Tuipra" which means, a land adjoining the water. In the ancient days Tripura was in fact adjoining to the Bay of Bengal. The beautiful state Tripura is situated in the North-Eastern zone of the Indian sub-continent. Tripura is a hilly landlocked state characterized by uneven and undulating surfaces. Most of the tribal communities live in hill areas. Not less than 19 different tribes present a series of colorful festivals and cultural varieties. There are about nineteen different tribes living in Tripura peacefully, the Tripuri, Jamatia, Noatia, Reang, Halam, Chakmah, Mog, Garo, Munda, Lushai, Oraon, Santhal, Uchoi, Khasi, Bhil, Lepcha, Bhutia, Chaimal and Kuki have their own cultural heritage.

The status of women:

The status of any social group is determined by its levels of literacy, education, standard of living and health nutrition.

The tribal women constitute like any other social group, about half of the total population. It has been reported that illiteracy, in tribal as well as non-tribal population, is positively correlated health. As women in all social groups, they are more illiterate than men. In general, their lower literacy rate, lower enrolment rate and their presence in the school. The status of women in a society is a significant reflection of the level of social justice in that society. Women's status is often described in terms of their level of income, employment, education, health and fertility as well as their roles within the family, the community and society. In tribal communities, the role of women is substantial and crucial. They constitute about half the total population but in tribal society women are more important than in other social groups, because they work harder and the family economy and management depends on them. Even after industrialization and the resultant commercialization swamped the tribal economy, women continued to play a significant role. Collection of minor forest produce is done mostly by women and children. Many also work as laborers in industries, households and construction, contributing to their family income. Despite exploitation by contractors and managers, tribals are more sincere and honest than non tribals. However, tribal women face problems and challenges in getting a sustainable livelihood and a decent life due to environmental degradation and the interference of outsiders. The strategy for tribal development, and specially women, needs improvement, betterment, development and upliftment to effect their empowerment. Tribal women have adjusted themselves to live a traditional life style in the local environment and follow occupations based on natural resources. Undoubtedly, the

programmes, oriented towards the empowerment of tribals, particularly women, have improved their socio-economic conditions and status. However, there are wide variations across regions and tribes in terms of work participation, sex ratio, economic productivity and social life.

Status of Tribal Women in Tripura

The impact of development planning needs to be evaluated in terms of desired and unanticipated consequences. The development process should be perceived as an involvement and reorganization mechanism of not only the socio-economic system but the entire eco-system. Against this backdrop, the present paper reviews the emerging perspective in the context of the socio-economic empowerment of tribal women and changing paradigms of development. Tribes entered Tripura through Chittagang Hill tracts. The Tripura tribal women are more empowered than the other tribal women of the country. Health status of Tripura tribal is better than the tribes of other states North-East India. Child marriage is very rarely found in these tribes. The migration of refugees are still continuing in the state, there is an urgent need for the state government to take initiation in order to stop the influx of refugees and attempt to safeguard the indigenous tribal community from the adverse effects as well as a series of administrative changes. Tribal population accounts only 31 per cent of total population, so a balance between tribal and non-tribal is very necessary to bring the harmony in the society. The rich historical, social and cultural heritage of tribal of Tripura should be preserved which their ancestors has bestowed upon them. Though the literacy rate of tribal is higher than the national average, female literacy (44.6 %) is a major concern to be taken care

of which is below the national average. Jhum cultivation is the main farming practice of tribal in Tripura. Though the empowerment of tribal women is in steady progress, an immediate action by the government, society and tribal community is very necessary to empower the tribal women. The Tripura Tribal Area Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) should consist of tribal people only so that proper welfare program can be revolutionized.

Education Status of Tribes:

Among all STs, 56.5 per cent of the population has been recorded as literate, which is higher than the national average for STs (47.1 %). The male literacy rate of 68 per cent and female of 44.6 per cent show high gender disparity in literacy. Among all STs, 62.7 per cent of the children in age group 5-14 years have been attending schools or any other educational institutions. Any Kuki Tribe has recorded the highest (77.6 %) and Munda the lowest (36.7 %) percentage attending schools or any other educational institutions. As regards level of education, merely 9.5 per cent of total literates among STs are having educational level of secondary and above. Among the major STs, Tripuri have 10.5 per cent of their total literates as matriculates, while among Munda (4 %), Reang (5.7 %), and Mog (6.5 %) this percentage is low (Table-1).

Table 1: Education Status of Scheduled Tribes in Tripura (2001) (Percent)

Scheduled Tribes	Literate Rate (7 years and above)		
	Male	Female	Total
1) Tripuri	73.7	50.2	62.1
2) Reang	58.8	27.3	39.8
3) Jamatia	72.5	47.9	60.2

4) Chakma	59.5	35.0	47.6
5)Halam	76.5	44.5	56.1
6)Mog	61.6	40.9	51.4
7)Munda	43.8	22.8	33.6
8)Kuki	81.9	63.8	73.1
9)Garo	75.3	58.3	66.4
TOTAL	68.0	44.6	56.5

Source: Office of the registrar general

Status of Tribal Women:

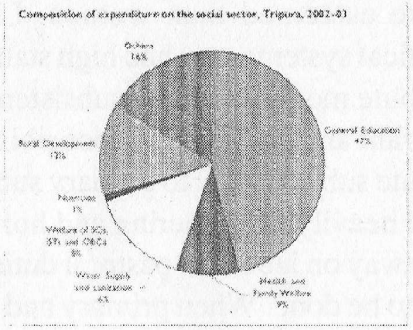
The popular image and perception of tribal women is that they enjoy much better social status than their non tribal counterparts as the tribal women have no fear of early marriage, no stigma of widow hood, have the freedom of divorce and remarriage, and earns in her own way to get economic independence. But she is less paid on equal work than her male counterparts, she cannot hold the office of the priest, neither is allowed to touch the plough or participate in the roofing of the house. Women of some tribal groups cannot be allowed to enter into the temple or attend any communal worship. The social status of tribal women of Tripura is little bit peculiar compare to their non-tribal sisters. The prevalence of bride price as contrasted to dowry, the existence of matrilineal and matriarchal society mostly sometimes confirms the higher social status of the tribal women. But in tribal society also, there are clearly defined areas of work among the males and females. Along with men folk in economic activities and earning livelihood, tribal women participate in all agricultural operations except ploughing. The division of work is heavily loaded against the tribal women in addition to an equal share in the production of economy. She also bears the burden of all house hold

works. The importance of tribal women in their society is significant because of the fact that the tribal women work hard almost relentlessly and the family economy and management depend on them. The unrecognized role of a silent worker primarily because the tribal women are not empowered to take decision both inside and outside of her family which her ancestral property. It must be mentioned that lack of education is the main hindrance in securing the power, establishing the command, placing decision though they are entitled for the property right. Economic development is a problem of women in general and the tribal women in particular. The problem becomes more surmountable of backward hilly regions inhibited by tribal people who reflect the co existence of many problems namely economic, geographical and sociological. The low level of literacy is the most acute problem for any progress of economic development. Literacy, education and subsequent good and sound economy have a great bearing on the status of women by enabling them to take right decision and earn a living. In the last decade or so the empowerment of women has been recognized as a central issue in determining the situational reality of their status. The Government of India has declared the year 2001 as women's empowerment year and a lot has been and is being done at national and international levels. Yet the question remains unanswered in that despite all the efforts. Why women, particularly the tribal women continue to be so much backward in almost all levels in comparison with their class sisters? The status and empowerment of Tribal Women of Tripura, though much better in comparison with other tribal women of India, is on the line of slow but steady progress.

Health and Social Status of Tribes:

Some of the basic indicators of the demographic and health status of a population are the total fertility rate, crude birth rate, natural growth rate, crude death rate, neonatal death rate, infant mortality rate and under-5 mortality rate. Some indicators like total fertility rate, Tripura performs far better than all other states of North-East India. Age at marriage is an important factor in determining women's health particularly since it is an important factor in determining the age of first pregnancy. The mean age at marriage of tribal women in Tripura 20 year (Year Book, 2010) was higher than the national figure (19.7 %). This improvement is related to enhancement in literacy rates both in urban as well as in rural areas. The incidents of child marriage was lower among the tribal population than among the non-tribal population. Therefore the understanding of tribal identity dynamics in Tripura is important as so many inter-community relations and socio-economic development are intimately connected to the question of identity, which belongs to where in the regional ethno-cultural scheme. Tribal identity or ethnicity is a community level consciousness and solidarity

Composition of expenditure on the social sector,Tripura, 2002-03



The status of the tribal women usually depends on the economic roles they play. The tribals in the past were usually forest dwellers and their livelihood to a great extent depended on the food-gathering economy. More than the men, the women walked long distances to fetch wood and fodder. Besides, they also collected fruits, roots and tubers, lac, gums and leaves for self-consumption and sale. The men also complemented them by collecting timber and logs. They climbed the trees to shake down the fruits that were gathered on the ground by women. As there has been large scale deforestation, women have to slog harder to retain the gathering economy.

In India women are discriminated due to several historical, religious and other reasons. A girl child is suppressed from the moment she is born in terms of personal development. She is made to undergo the feelings of being inferior and feeble. She is denied the prospects for personal expression. There are various hypotheses about why women have relatively high or low status. The common premise is that women status is high when they contribute substantially to primary subsistence activities. Women position is low in the societies where food getting is entirely men's job like hunting, herding or intensive agriculture. In the historical times when warfare was essential, men were more esteemed than women. Likewise in the centralised political systems men had high status. Men in most societies contribute more to primary subsistence activities, as women have infant and child care responsibilities. However, women contribute substantially to primary subsistence activities that depend heavily on gathering and horticulture and in which men are away on labour or pastoral duties while subsistence work has to be done. When primary and secondary sub-

sistence activities are counted, women work more than men.

Education:

The education is a fundamental right that provides opportunities for socioeconomic uplift. The girl child is deliberately denied from the future opportunity of the total development. The reasons associated with not educating girl child are financial constraints, early marriages, submissiveness, motherhood, and parental perception of education on women's worldview. Girls have no say on the topic of education. It is entirely parents' decision. Regarding their aspiration to educate their daughters, the parents in the four communities had different response. More than half of them wanted to send their daughters to schools but others thought it was useless. In absence of hired labour the girls, work at home and fields is of utmost importance and all considered the fact that eventually the girls have to get married and start their families. Where parents are enthusiastic about educating their daughters, they enroll their daughters in schools but rarely allow them to complete their schooling. The girls study up to primary or middle level and get married. Sometimes girls are withdrawn from school after three years (when they have learned to write their names) to work, with preference for education given to boys.

Median number of completed years of schooling,by age group, west Muhuripur, Mainama and khakchang villages, 2005, and rural India, 1998-99 (in years)

Age group	Medium number of completed years of education(males) in West Muhuripur South District	Mainama Dhalai	Khakchang North District	Rural India
6 to 9	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.4
10 to 14	4.0	4.0	2.0	4.7
15 to 19	8.0	8.0	6.0	8.1
20 to 29	8.0	9.0	5.0	8.2
30 to 39	4.0	8.0	4.0	5.6
40 to 49	4.0	5.0	0.5	5.0
50+	0.0	3.0	0.0	0.0
All ages	5.0	6.0	2.5	4.6

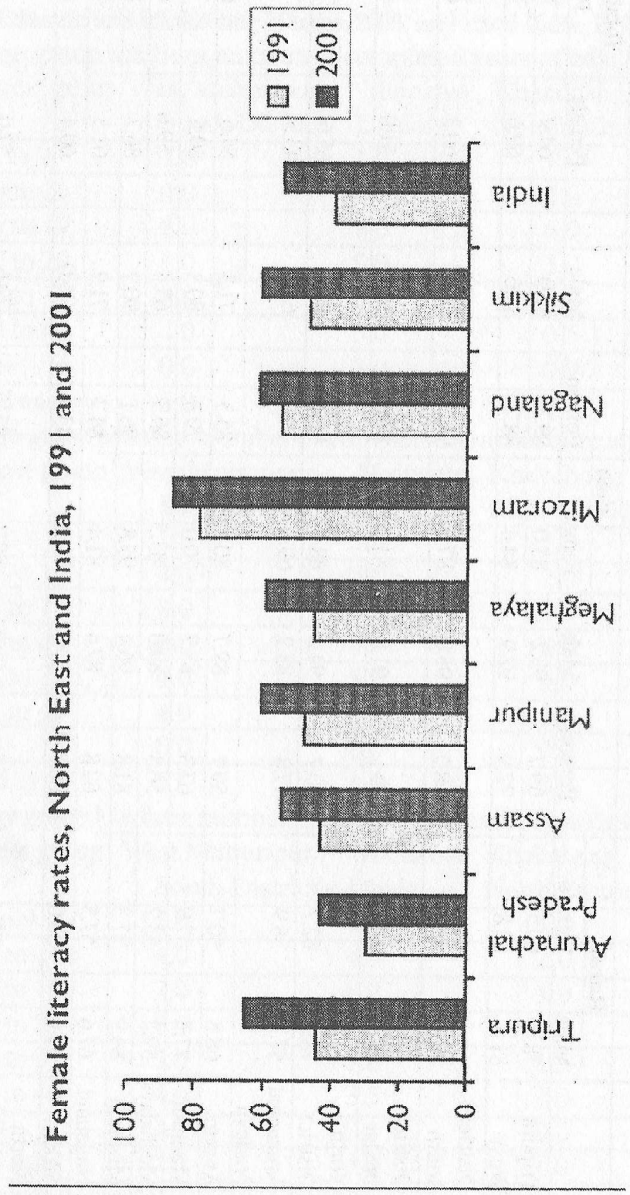
Age group	Medium number of completed years of education(females)in West Muhuripur South District	Mainama Dhalai	Khakchang North District	Rural India
6 to 9	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.2
10 to 14	4.0	5.0	2.0	4.1
15 to 19	8.0	8.0	3.0	5.5
20 to 29	8.0	8.0	0.0	0.0
30 to 39	4.0	5.0	0.0	0.0
40 to 49	4.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
50+	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
All ages	5.0	4.0	0.0	0.0

Age group	Medium number of completed years of education(persons)in West Muhuripur South District	Mainama Dhalai	Khakchang North District	Rural India
6 to 9	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.3
10 to 14	4.0	4.0	2.0	4.5
15 to 19	7.0	8.0	5.0	7.1
20 to 29	8.0	8.0	3.0	5.4
30 to 39	5.0	7.0	1.5	2.1
40 to 49	4.0	3.5	0.0	0.0
50+	1.0	0.5	0.0	0.0
All ages	5.0	5.0	1.0	2.6

Source Foundation for Agrarian Studies (2006)

Table 2
Literacy ratcs for persons aged 7 and above by sex and location in Tripura by district,North East and India, 2001

	Rural			Urban			Total		
	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person
Tripura	78.4	60.5	69.7	93.2	85.0	89.2	81.0	64.9	73.2
West	81.5	63.8	72.9	92.9	84.4	88.7	84.6	69.6	77.3
District South	77.6	58.2	68.2	95.0	87.4	91.3	78.9	60.3	69.9
District Dhalai	68.6	48.9	59.1	91.8	81.9	87.2	70.2	51.0	60.9
North District	78.2	62.7	70.7	94.2	88.3	91.3	80.0	65.6	73.0
Arunachal Pradesh	57.7	36.9	47.8	85.2	69.5	78.3	63.8	43.5	54.3
Assam	68.8	50.7	59.7	89.7	80.2	85.3	71.3	54.6	63.3
Manipur	77.3	57.0	67.3	88.7	70.0	79.3	80.3	60.5	70.5
Meghalaya	59.2	53.2	56.3	89.0	83.5	86.3	65.4	59.6	62.6
Mizoram	84.9	77.3	81.3	96.4	95.8	96.1	90.7	86.7	88.8
Nagaland	67.6	57.5	62.8	87.4	81.4	84.7	71.2	61.5	66.6
Sikkim	74.5	58.0	66.8	87.8	79.2	83.9	76.0	60.4	68.8
North East	69.1	52.4	61.0	90.0	80.7	85.7	72.6	57.0	65.1
India	71.4	46.7	59.4	86.7	73.2	80.3	75.8	54.2	63.4



Today's tribal women society in Tripura:

Education gives people decision making, economic status and empowerment that always go hand in hand. To-day's tribal women society wishes that their future would be good. They do not want their children to suffer as they have suffered. They demand good educational and job facilities for their children. Slowly educational status of women and their children, accessibility to all kinds of infrastructural activities improved decision making capacity in all important aspects is appreciable in states like Tripura. Article 46 of the Constitution of India lays down that the state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and in particular of the scheduled tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. A large number of tribal women have missed education at different stages and in order to empower them there is a great need of providing opportunities so as to enable them to assume leadership qualities for economic self-reliance and even social transformation. There are number of studies exposed the educational development of tribal women by quantitative indicators in the form of enrolment, literacy rate and educational facilities. Though the governments have taken several steps in the development of tribal education projects and schemes much need to be exercised. The social welfare programmes have been ineffective due to deficiency in the administrative scheme, lack of sore trained management, lack of general preparedness for large investments, lack of accounting systems, procedural delays and insufficient of proper monitoring and evaluation. The constitutional directive to allow for free and mandatory education for all children up to the age of fourteen years has not yet been fulfilled.

Problems of Tribal Women Education:

Statement : 1 Literacy Rate among Major STs

Sl No	Name of the Scheduled Tribe	Literate Rate (7 years and above)		
		Total	Male	Female
1	All Scheduled Tribes	56.5	68.0	44.6
2	Tripura	62.1	73.7	50.2
3	Riang	39.8	51.8	27.3
4	Jamatia	60.2	72.5	47.9
5	Chakma	47.6	59.5	35.0
6	Halam	56.1	67.5	44.5
7	Mag	51.4	61.6	40.9
8	Munda	33.6	43.8	22.8
9	Any Kuki Tribe	73.1	81.9	63.8
10	Garoo	66.8	75.3	58.3

Source: Office of the Registrar General

There are various factors responsible for the slow advance of the educational development of tribal women. The factors like poverty(Poorness), unbiased attitude of the parents, irrational and bias, problem of suitable teacher, language and communication, inadequate infrastructure facilities in education institution, high loss and stagnation. First and foremost indicator is poor economic status is a great deterrent to successful education of the tribal children especially for female children. In tribal communities, the role of women is substantial and crucial and women are more important than in other social groups, because they work harder and the family economy and management depends on the. The tribal community thinks that if the child is taken away from his normal economic work to attend school, the family deprives of the little income, which she brings. As a consequence, the parents have

to feed the child out of their earning and resulted economic marginalisation of the household. In these circumstances, education, the basic necessity of life, is a matter of luxury for the tribal family. A huge section of tribal parents avoid sending their children to school to grab the costless educational opportunities offered to them. However tribal and non-tribal teachers feel hard to convert the tribal parents to send their youngsters to school. The tribal community feels that there is no need for the girls to go to school and waste their time. Psychological and social factors like illiteracy of the parents and their indifference to education, lack of encouragement by the community, motivation and "insecurity" of future for being educated. Other factors like low social interaction between students and teachers, and between teachers and parents, suspicion over the sincerity of the non-tribal teachers and in many cases shortage of tribal teachers also discourage parents to send their children to school.

Conclusion:

Tribal women in Tripura play a significant role in the economic development of tribals as they contribute in various economic activities and education. Education is a crucial requirement for the sustained growth of a developing society and lack of it is largely responsible for the exploitation and pitiable plight of the tribals. Tribal women play a major role in the co management of their natural, social, economic resources and agricultural development including crop production, livestock production, horticulture and post harvest operations but they remain backward due to traditional values, illiteracy, superstitions, and dominant roles in decision making, social evils and many other cultural factors. Presently the urban tribals are de-

veloping a lot in education as well as in job market. Nowadays we can find in Tripura many tribal girls are completing their higher studies at college level as well as from university level also. There is a saying that "if you educate a boy, you only educate an individual; if you educate a girl you are educating the whole family. Education imparts knowledge, and knowledge of self identity and human environment will infuse a sense of confidence, courage and ability among the weaker sections of the society to know and overcome their problems associated with exploitation and deprivation, and avail socio-economic and political opportunities extended to them. On November 28, 2001 the Government enacted the 93rd Amendment of the Constitution making the Right to Education a Fundamental Right. The main aim of education is to change the cultural norms and patterns of life of tribal women to make them economically independent, to organize themselves to form strong groups so as to analyse their situations and conditions of living, understand their rights and responsibilities and to enable them to participate and contribute to the development of women and the entire society. The population of STs is very high in some states and in some states there are no STs. With regard to the literacy rates, female literacy has raised considerably in the past four decades both in urban as well as rural areas. Moreover the percentage of Schedule Tribe girls in higher education has been gradually increasing. The fact remains that a large number of tribal women in rural areas might have missed educational opportunities at different stages and in order to empower them varieties of skill training programmes have to be designed and organised. The skill could be for assuming political leadership or for economic self-reliance or even social

transformation.

Suggestions for development:

ò Tribal women are still lacking behind in comparison with their çlass sisters which may be due tó illiteracy, lack of awareness, lack of financial support etc. Though the empowerment of tribal women is in steady progress, an immediate action by the government, society and tribal community is very necessary to empower the tribal women.

ò Though the state government and central government had set up Tripura Tribal Area Autonomous District Council (TTAADC), it is not functioning properly as it was expected. The autonomous body should consist of tribal people only so that proper welfare program can be revolutionized.

Budget Estimate of Tribal Welfare Department for 2013-14

(Rs. in lakhs)

Type of Scheme	Budget Estimate (2013-14)
Plan Scheme (Including Grants to TTAADC)	19088.40
Non-Plan Scheme (Including share of taxes to TTAADC)	5042.50
Central Sponsored Scheme	4100.00
NEC	100.00
Total : (Plan + Non Plan + CSS+NEC)	28330.90

In spite of the government taking initiatives in improving the living condition of the tribals, but in reality the tribals are still lacking in many facilities such as drinking water, proper sanitation, primary health center, pucca road, nutritional food security and quality education. It is in the hand of the government and people who are in-charge of the various schemes to make the facilities provided beneficial for the tribals of Tripura.

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Participation of Tribal Women Workes and Perception of Tribal Women Workers and Perceptions of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

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Abstract

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), later known as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), was instituted in India in 2005. This Act ensures 100 days of work at the statutory the lowest pay permitted by law to all rural family units whose members are eager to perform incompetent physical work (Unskilled labours). This work is focused around a review of 1060 MGNREGA workers led in May-June 2012 in undivided four districts of Tripura. The paper concentrates on the female tribal labourers in the example to highlight the effect of thc MGNREGA in the lives of female workers. Noteworthy profits reported by the females incorporate expanded food security and a superior capacity to stay away from unsafe work. The accessibility of neighbourhood compensation business at the statutory the lowest pay permitted by law for females is another advancement connected with thc MGNREGA in a number of the ranges secured by the overview. On the other hand, the support of females shifts generally over the review districts. The paper closes by recognizing a percentage of the problems to tribal women's participation in the MGNREGA.

In this paper the 'Women' or 'female' words are indicating 'Tribal women' only.

Introduction

The Indian Parliament passed a landmark legislation in August 2005. This was named as National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA). Later on it was renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA/MNREGA). It is a national law funded by the central government in India and implemented in all states in the country, which creates a justiciable 'right to work' for all households in rural India. Under the MGNREGA, households in rural India have a legal right to get 'at least' 100 days of unskilled manual labour in each financial year which, as per law, is to be provided by local government when work is demanded by any worker or group of workers registered under the MGNREGA. Women and men are paid an equal wage, which is the statutory minimum wage ascertained by the state1 government. Starting from 200 districts on 2 February 2006, the MGNREGA covered all the districts of India from 1 April 2008. In Tripura it started with Dhalai Tripura during 2006.

This paper presents some findings related to women MGNREGA workers from a field survey conducted from the year 2009 to 2012 in six districts of Tripura viz. South Tripura, West Tripura, Dhalai Tripura, Unakoti Tripura, North Tripura and Gomati Tripura. The survey was aimed at understanding the impact MGNREGA implementation has had in the lives of workers who are currently working under the MGNREGA. The enactment of the MGNREGA in 2005 came about partly as a result of a sustained campaign by academics and activists across India. Significant efforts were made by campaign groups to

highlight the crisis of food and work availability being faced by large numbers of the rural poor in India. The MGNREGA, as finally enacted, was a diluted version of the "citizens draft"3. Nevertheless it signified a huge step forward as a social security mechanism for the rural poor. This paper attempts to understand the perceptions of this legislation as reported by women workers currently working under the Act. The purpose of the paper is twofold: one, to highlight the importance of the MGNREGA, as perceived by women workers and two, to show that the full potential of this legislation is far from being realised.

The MGNREGA's potential in empowering women by providing them work opportunities has been commented upon by other research as well (Dreze and Oldiges, 2007, Dreze and Oldiges, 2009, ISST, 2006, Jandu, 2008), looking at all India participation rates in the first two years of its implementation, Dreze and Oldiges (2009) point to an increase in the participation of women (from 40 percent in 2006-07 to 44 percent in 2007-08). Large inter district variations in the participation of Tribal women have been observed. Other works on MGNREGA has highlighted the various benefits accruing to women from MGNREGA. This paper explores this further.

This paper presents the results from a survey (hereafter "MGNREGA Survey 2008") which involved unannounced visits to a random sample of 98 work sites, spread over 6 districts in the state Tripura. Interviews were conducted with a random sample of 1060 MGNREGA workers currently employed at these work sites. The survey was not focused on women specifically, but 32 percent of sample workers were Tribal women. The interviews with women workers provided insights into the

significance of MGNREGA work for these women and highlighted the 'transformative' potential of the MGNREGA in enhancing economic and social security. Though the potential of this programme is substantial, implementation varies across states. In a mosaic of chequered implementation however, many narratives from women workers tell a significant story about the benefits of the MGNREGA. It is highlighted the significance of MGNREGA work for women workers and make the case that attention must be paid by the government towards effective implementation to ensure that these important benefits are not scuttled.

Provisions in the legislation

Despite some weakness, the MGNREGA is a remarkable legislation under which local administrations are legally bound to provide work on demand to any worker or group of workers who apply for work, within 15 days of receipt of a work application, provided workers are willing to undertake 'unskilled manual labour' on public or private worksites operated under the MGNREGA[7]. In the event that the local administration fails to provide work, an unemployment allowance is to be paid to the workers[8]. The MGNREGA promises 'not less than 100 days' of work to all households in rural India in each financial year where adults in the household are willing to undertake unskilled manual labour at the statutory minimum wage[9], which is equal for both men and women[10]. The Act mandates that at least one-third of the workers should be women. Besides this, the MGNREGA also provides for childcare facilities at the worksite when more than five children under six years of age are present at the worksite[11].

Women's access to casual wage work

The MGNREGA has provided income-earning opportunities to women where hardly any existed before. The reasons for the unavailability of wage labour for women are complex and vary across regions. Women are primary providers of care roles for the sick and the elderly. Outside of unpaid housework, women have limited opportunities for agricultural and non agricultural wage work, which at any rate are not continuous[12]. This section highlights some of the factors that limit women's access to wage work, based on the qualitative and quantitative data[13].

In the survey all workers were asked whether they worked for wages, other than MGNREGA wages, in the three months preceding the survey. Only 30% of the Tribal female respondents reported earning cash income (other than MGNREGA) in the past three months.Women respondents were divided in to two broad categories, i.e. a) those who reported that they were not actively participating in non MGNREGA wage work earlier (three months preceding the preceding the survey).b) Women with primary wage earning responsibilities and those who did earn a not MGNREGA wage in the months preceding the survey. We make the case for the significance of the MGNREGA in offering wage earning opportunities to tribal women.

The group of women who reported that they did not participate in the wage labour market earlier[14] includes for instance, women who were working on homestead farms earlier, or women who did not seek wage labour earlier due to the low wages they would have been offered typically in locally available agricultural work[15], or women who were explicitly socially

restricted from undertaking wage work earlier.

Women who did earn a not MGNREGA wage earlier and those with 'primary wage earning responsibility' earned a wage by way of agricultural labour in their own village or in other villages, working in the construction industry in towns and cities, stone breaking at stone quarries and collection and sale of 'forest produce' such as vegetables cultivated in Juhms, pineapple cultivated in hill slopes, different spinaches, banana, Jackfruit, grass and fuel wood.

However these employment opportunities are not without problems. The fact that only 30% of sample women workers who are Tribal stated they had earned any cash income from a source other than the MGNREGA in the three months preceding the survey highlight the irregularity of wage work available to women and consequently the vulnerable position they must find themselves in. Most women had limited or seasonal or insecure earnings. Agricultural work, are all seasonal in nature. Migration for work in the construction industry exposes workers to a range of vulnerabilities (exploitation, illness) to add to which gender biases are consistently faced in the availability of work15. In addition to vulnerabilities because of migration, construction, brick kiln industry, stone crushing are replete with hazards and the possibility of injury. With regard to hazards faced while working, many respondents engaged in collection of forest produce too pointed out they fear attacks from wild animals.

Thus, women do not have many other employment opportunities (locally and even otherwise in some cases) and further women workers are, 'as a rule', paid less than their male counterparts in rural and urban casual wage work.17. Half of

the women in the sample said that had they not worked on the MGNREGA worksites, they would have worked at home or would have remained unemployed. Those women who do have other employment opportunities face "invisible" constraints: some women might have considered working only on the fields owned by farmers from their own community or at a place where other persons from their community are working. Similar constraints and limitations prevail when migrating for work to cities[18].

Thus employment opportunities for women in the private labour market are limited, irregular, poorly paid, can be hazardous, and often involve migration (which raises a whole range of issues of its own).

Table 1: Profile of Sample Workers

Profile	Tribal	Non Tribal
Proportion of MNREGA workers who are	32	68
ST/SC	75	71
Illiterate	82	52
Proportion of MNREGA workers who		
Had other sources of cash income	30	55
Collect their own wages	78	92
Keep their own wages	69	51
Prefer payments through banks	53	44
Average wage (Rs./day)		
Statutory minimum wage	88*	88*
Agricultural work	47	53
Other casual work	58	71
MGNREGA wage	85	85

*Unweighted average of state minimum wages in the six districts of Tripura

MGNREGA: An expansion of employment opportunities

Women not actively participating in the wage labour market earlier[19] said the work provided under the MGNREGA opens up a new opportunity for them. The wider acceptability of MGNREGA work derives from several factors: it is locally available, being government work there is regularity and predictability of working hours, less chance of work conditions being exploitative and work is considered socially acceptable and 'dignified'. Last (but not the least), it is better paid than other work. These attractive features of MGNREGA for women are discussed below.

The Act stipulates that work be provided locally, within 5 kilometres of the residence[20]. This makes MGNREGA work logistically feasible. Since women continue to bear the main responsibility of household work, travelling any distance for paid work makes this task more difficult for them. Since MGNREGA work is provided in the village itself this helps to make it 'socially acceptable'.[21]

Other reasons why MGNREGA work was regarded 'acceptable' are pertinent. MGNREGA promises the statutory minimum wage. Even in cases where the minimum wage is not paid (as is often the case of other states like Rajasthan22), MGNREGA wages imply a substantial jump in the earning potential for women (see Table 1). As per Survey data, the average wage earned by women in the private labour market ranged between Rs. 47-58 per day, for agricultural and other casual labour respectively. On MGNREGA, the average wage earned was Rs. 85, clearly a huge increase over other wage opportunities. Some women stated they did not engage themselves in agricultural wage labour earlier because they would have been

paid too little and it was not worth their while to go out and work for a pittance[23]. The prospect of earning a substantial wage within the village in some cases might swing 'acceptability' in favour of women.

The fact that MGNREGA work is offered by the local government rather than by a private employer in some ways frees potential women workers from caste, and community based strictures related to who they van and cannot work with.[24]

Being government work, the hours of work are clearly stated and are limited to 7-8 hours in a day (in the case of daily wage). This often cannot be expected in the case of other work and MGNREGA employment is therefore considered relatively 'safe' in the sense that it is thought that there are some checks and balances in place to prevent harassment or workers. Further, MGNREGA employment offers a new sense of independence: for instance Parbatikanya Tripura (Dhalai Tripura district) said she would have stayed at home or worked on her won field had MGNREGA work not been available. She considered working on the MGNREGA (government) worksite because she did not have to go through a potentially embarrassing and humiliating conservation to ask anyone in the village for work.

Women with primary wage earning responsibilities

Some features of attractiveness of MGNREGA work for women not actively participating in wage work earlier, also apply to women who were actively seeking work or were part of the labour market in the months preceding the survey.

First, they are now able to access the minimum wage, which is higher than the agricultural wage (and has, in fact, increased in many places since the Act came into force).

Parbatikanya also said that she was glad to have access to MGNREGA employment since the wage she can now earn in the village has increased significantly. The wage she would get for locally available work was Rs. 15 per day, whereas she gets Rs. 84 for MGNREGA work. If she had not got this work, she would have had to migrate with her four month old child, since she had not got any other local employment in the past three months. She is very much thankful to the Left Government of Tripura she stated.

In other words, because this is government work, where the relatively high statutory minimum wage is paid and where women workers are paid the same as men, it is actively sought by women who would have looked for wage work had MGNREGA work not been available (see Table 1). MGNREGA work allows some measure of protection from having to migrate in search of work, or, given the small amount of work currently available, at least allows individual to postpone migration. This protection from migration implies a significant improvement in the quality of life because of the costs and risks associated with migration.

Access to work in the village is also critically important for those who are coping with illness of a family member. Tilottama Tripura (South Tripura district) for instance said her husband suffers from tuberculosis and is too weak to work. MGNREGA work allows her to work close to home, earn money for household expenses, repay a loan taken earlier and allows her to take care of her children. Sixty five years old Geri Mog's (Gomati Tripura district) son lives in Ahmedabad and her husband is too old for work. She is the sole income earner from her family. She says she would have done some

other work in the absence of the MGNREGA but prefers MGNREGA work to keep herself and her husband from hunger. The money earned is mostly spent on food, clothes and medicines. For those widows who aren't getting widow pensions[27]. MGNREGA employment offers some relief and confidence. KiranmalaJamatia (Gomati Tripura District) is one such woman. While earlier there was uncertainty as to whether she would have enough food to eat, she is now in a position to contribute to the family pot by contributing to her grandchildren's education. She also reports, like many others, that getting small advances from the local moneylender is now easier because moneylenders seem to be assured that they will get their money back. Importantly, for some women and especially for women heading households, the MGNREGA has made loans more easily available (earlier lenders wondered whether they would get their money back, now there seems to be easier availability of credit) and in some cases, women say they have been able to repay at least part of their loan.

The 'dignity' associated with doing government work and not having to seek work from private landlords or contractors is also a very significant benefit for women workers. Work with private landlords and contractors is often replete with an underlying threat or possibility of sexual abuse and exploitation[29]. Thwailak Tripura (South Tripura district) told investigators that earlier she used to do housework in neighbours homes in the village which she found demeaning. Government work opened under the MGNREGA has allowed her to leave this work[30].

Several respondents (27% of the female respondents) stated that work provided under the MGNREGA has allowed

them to stop doing hazardous work or work they did not want to do (e.g., working at road, going to the forest to cut wood etc.) - see table 4. They said they no longer needs to go the jungle to cut wood where wild animals were a constant threat.

Social and economic benefits

It is important to note that there are large variations in the female participation in the MGNREGA across sample areas. For the survey, a random sample of workers was taken from the muster roll of a then ongoing worksite under the MGNREGA. Problems in implementation include accessing work as per the provisions of the MGNREGA[31]; problems with being paid at regular intervals and the low scale of employment generated - on average 45 days per year for the study period.

In the overall sample, MGNREGA was considered 'very important' by 68% respondents[32]. This figure increases to 81% in the households that have worked for at least 60 days per year during the study period. Looking at the response from widows separately, MGNREGA was also considered 'very important' by 82% of widows in the sample. Of the total sample, more than two-thirds (69%) of the tribal respondent stated that, the MGNREGA had helped them avoid hunger, while 57% stated the MGNREGA had helped them avoid migration and equal proportion of workers also said they had used MGNREGA wages to buy medicines in the last 12 months[33].

A large majority, 79% of women workers collect their own wages, and generally they keep their wages. In fact, as Table 1 shows, the proportion of workers who keep their own wages is 69% . One may argue that what really matters is not only who keeps the money, but also who has control over it. Inter-

views with women suggest that in a large number of cases, they have substantial say in deciding how the money is spent[34].

Two-third of the female respondents reported having to face less hunger as a result of MGNREGA employment (see Table 3). These earnings bring improved food security in a variety of ways: cash in hand allows households to buy food in larger quantities which is generally cheaper than buying on a daily basis; women reported easier access to credit from local money lenders to meet food expenditures; there were some indications form the interviews with women of a diversification of diets, even if only very marginally, from a cereal-dominated diet. MGNREGA also seems to be functioning as a "health line" for many rural households. Across the states, MGNREGA workers reported using their wages to treat an illness in the family or for their own medical expenses. Nearly half of the female respondents said that MGNREGA helped them cope with an illness in the family. Much of the economic uncertainty which afflicts the lives of the rural poor stems from sudden illness and chronic ailments. To that extent MGNREGA seems to be fulfilling its role of enhancing economic security. Interview after interview provides insights into how MGNREGA employment is helping tribal women take charge of their lives, in little (and not so little) ways. Where the MGNREGA is implemented well, it has provided predictable and regular employment to tribal women. In their fragile existence, the MGNREGA has brought mental respite from the tensions of being able to fulfil their basic needs. These signs of relief peep through their statements regarding the improvement in their basic needs. These signs of relief peep through their statements regarding the improvement in their ability to borrow/get credit[35]; from

knowing that they won't have to sleep hungry; form not having to migrate in search of work which they are not sure of getting; from the assurance that there will be some money to pay for small and large medical bills should someone in the family fall ill; from being protected from very strenuous and poorly paid work and being protected from exploitative work conditions including sexual exploitation in some cases and conditions where there is no clear demarcation of working hours or tasks. In this sense, the NREGA has made a significant contribution to improving the wellbeing of women.

Areas of concern

This section focuses on three areas of concern with respect to Tribal women and their access to work under MGNREGA. First, there are major barriers to women's participation. Second, there has been a thrust (from the state government) towards payment of wages through banks. Some issues related to bank payments are discussed here, finally the low rates of participation of women in Gram Sabhas are discussed.

Barriers to Women's Participation

We begin with a detailed discussion of the persistent barriers to women's participation in MGNREGA works. The low participation rates in four out of six sample districts bears witness to the existence of such barriers.

First, there are, in many areas, tenacious social norms against women working outside the home, there were misconceptions like women can't register as workers under MGNREGA and were told that this programme was "not for them". It was also told to them that they are 'too weak' and cannot work on work sites. Not only that where there is excess

workers, the tribal women were targeted and turned away from work sites. Further it was also pointed out that they are facing difficult economic circumstances the certainty of accessing work when sought is critical as is regularity of payment[39]. In many places work is being opened at the instance of panchayats/ village councils and line departments of the governmentrather than on the instance of workers who have a legal right to demand work. This is also the case for many respondents to the current survey. However, women being turned away from work, especially in these circumstances is a matter of concern. This combined with the fact that men and women earn the same wage has created a resistance to the participation of women by men who want to maintain privileged access to this work.

Second, during the study period the continued illegal presence of contractors is a significant negative factor affecting the availability of work and its benefits for women. On worksites where contractors were involved, 35% of women workers said they were harassed, as compared to only eight percent on contractor-free worksites.

Third, the other big hurdle inhibiting the participation of women is the lack of childcare facilities. The Act requires that when there are more than five children under the age of six, a female worker be appointed to take care of them. Child care facilities being provided were not found anywhere. The lack of these facilities can be crippling for women, especially for those with breastfeeding infants who cannot be left behind for long hours[42]. However, leaving the child at home is not without its problems: sometimes the child is left unsupervised, breastfed children are fed once in the morning and left alone until evening when the mother returns which has a significant adverse im-

pact on the health of the child and the mother. Meanwhile, the mothers spend their day in anxiety worrying about the child's safety at home. What is encouraging is that four out of every five women said that if some child care facilities are provided they would bring their child to the worksite.

Fourth, delayed payments also come in the way of participation of poor tribal women. Delays in wage payments make things particularly difficult for single women, who cannot afford to wait for work and wages as they are the sole earners in the family. When the wages do not come on time, they are often forced to return to previous, less preferred forms of employment.

Bank payments for MGNREGA workers

Another area of concern relates to the en masse switch over to bank payments of MGNREGA wages. This is a relatively recent 'administrative innovation', which is perceived by the government as a 'magic pill' for ending corruption[45]. The introduction of bank payment has important implications for women workers. For instance, in the event that bank accounts are opened in the name of one job card holder, women might not be left with access to money earned.

In the survey, roughly 53% of women in the sample wanted payments through banks and/or post offices. The main reasons in favour of bank payments include the perception that payment through banks will increase the possibility of saving and a reduction in the possibility of being cheated by those who distribute wages in the villages. Other reasons why people want bank payments include the perception that this will lead to a reduction in delays in payments, that a lump-sum money will be available in one instalment. Interestingly, for women, it

is also seen as an effective tool for increasing their control over the use of this money. The case for cash payments however, is made on the grounds that banks are often at a distance from the place of residence, in some cases in distant ADC villages and getting there involves additional costs, and that it would lead to some loss of liquidity.

Women's participation in Gram Sabhas

Regarding gram sabhas', only 33% of sample workers stated they had attended a gram sabha during the preceding 12 months. Further a large number of women respondents said that they do not go to gram sabhas' because they are either not welcome at the gram sabhas' or that they think it is not a meeting that women can attend. Since decisions related to the implementation of MGNREGA works are supposed to take place in gram sabhas', it is significant that most women look at gram sabhas' as meetings they should not attend. It is important to qualify this however, with the fact that at the moment in many places, gram sabha meetings tend not to be held. It can be hoped therefore that as gram sabha meetings become more prevalent, more women will come forward to participate and speak at these gram sabhas'.

Conclusion

Over the past three years, employment works opened under the MGNREGA in Tripura have had a significant impact on the lives of Tribal women workers. It is important to note that relatively minuscule levels of MGNREGA employment have resulted in the significant perceived benefits from the MGNREGA. Serious problems remain in the nature of implementation across districts of Tripura. The urgent need to remove these problems in implementation cannot be over emphasised. Given the healthcare for themselves and their families, and in

leaving potentially hazardous work- it is important that the problems in implementation should not derail the gains.

Table 2: Participation of Tribal Women in MGNREGA.

	South	West	Dhalai	Unakoti	North	Gomati	All Districts
Number of Tribal women in the sample	28	23	37	90	154	06	338
Participation of Tribal Women (%)	13	25	18	44	71	5	32
Days of MGNREGA employment during study period	45	45	47	45	42	45	44.8
Proportion of women workers who							
a.Collect their wages	75	74	63	71	100	0	78
b.Keep their own wage	67	74	59	71	74	0	69
Prefer payments through banks	56	73	13	39	64	67	53
Faced harassment at the worksite	15	35	3	28	5	0	14

Table 3: Social and Economic Benefits to Tribal Women.

Districts	Proportion of female MGNREGA workers who said that it helped them					
	To Avoid					
	Hunger	Migration	Illness	Hazardous work	Repay debts	With Child's schooling
South	74	14	57	7	7	25
West	78	39	35	39	39	26
Dhalai	57	40	31	45	17	12
Unakoti	57	39	33	17	24	27
North	69	26	56	30	29	39
Gomati	100	17	17	20	67	50
All	**67**	**31**	**46**	**27**	**26**	**31**

Table 4: Barriers to Tribal Women's Participation.

Districts	Proportion of female workers in the sample	Proportion of female workers reporting that		
		They faced Harassment at the worksite	Worksites were contractor managed	There were delays in payment of wages[1]
South	13	15	15	12
West	25	35	30	70
Dhalai	18	3	38	100
Unokoti	44	28	46	7
North	71	5	0	7
Gomati	5	0	0	20
All	**32**	**14**	**19**	**16**

Note: [1] Proportion who reported that wages were not paid within 15 days among those women workers who had been paid at the sample worksite.

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Notes:

1 Provinces in India are called states.

2 Taken together, these States account for 40% of the total population of India (Census of India 2001)

3 The term 'citizens' draft' refers to the legislation which were proposed by campaign groups, which included amongst other things the provision that 100 days of work per financial year should be provided per person rather than per household.

4 Public worksites are opened under the Act for works such as lake making, road making and contour bunding (in order to prevent water and top soil erosion and support groundwater re-harvestation). As per Schedule II of the NREGA, "The focus of the Scheme (is).. on the following works in their order of priority:-

(i) water conservation and water harvesting; (ii) drought proofing (including afforestation and tree plantation);

(iii) irrigation canals including micro and minorirrigation works; (iv) provision of irrigation facility to land owned by households belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes or to land of beneficiaries of land reforms or that of the

beneficiaries under the IndiraAwas Yojana of the Government of India; (v) renovation of traditional water bodies including desilting of tanks; (vi) land development; (vii) flood control and protection works including drainage in water logged areas; (viii) rural connectivity to provide all-weather access; and (ix) any other work which may be notified by the Central Government in consultation with the State Government."

5 States in India are divided into districts for administrative purposes. Districts are further divided into subdistricts, commonly called 'blocks' (short for 'community development blocks'). The nomenclature for sub-districts however can vary across states. In simple terms the administrative division is: State > district > block > gram panchayat (village level local government)

6 The 10 sample districts were: Araria and Kaimur (Bihar); Surguja (Chhattisgarh); Palamau and Koderma (Jharkhand); Badwani and Sidhi (Madhya Pradesh); Dungarpur and Sirohi (Rajasthan); Sitapur (Uttar Pradesh). The NREGA was rolled out in three phases: Starting with 200 districts in 2006-7 ("Phase 1" districts), 130 districtswere added in 2007-8, and NREGA was extended to the entire country in April 2008. Districts included in the 'NREGA Survey2008' are all "Phase 1" districts, where the Act came into force in February 2006.

7 Workers have an option to make advance applications (i.e., seek work at a later specified date). Workapplications may be written or oral. (a copy of NREGA is available at available at http://nrega.nic.in)

8 See Section 7 of NREGA 2005

9 See Sections 3, 4 and 6 of NREGA, 2005

10 Under the provisions of the Minimum Wages Act, 1948; See section 6 of the NREGA, 2005

11 See Section 5 and Schedule II of the NREGA, 2005

12 See for instance Chen, 1989, Breman, 1996; Drèze and Sharma, 1998. On this see also Harriss-White (2003, p.26) who says "The village still tends to be the key unit for organisation of rural labour, particularly for women workers as they are stuck with the prior requirements of housework and children"

13 The random sample of workers was drawn from lists of workers on NREGA sites. As a result, some categories of 'potential workers' such as women unable to participate in the NREGA for lack of child care facilities are actually excluded from the sample. It is important to bear in mind that the focus of the survey was the implementation of the NREGA, and the perceived benefits if any to the worker from work being implemented under the NREGA. For lack of time and resources and for the reason of survey priority mentioned earlier, more detailed questions were not asked about each respondent's labour history. However, details related to the respondents work were also sought inthe 'qualitative' component of the questionnaire and these are reliedon heavily in the current paper. Though a lot moredetail could have been collected we are of the opinion that the briefcomments from the sample respondents in themselvesare revealing both about work availability, the need for and access to wage income and about the effectiveness of the NREGA itself.

14 It can be assumed that in most cases this group ofwomen could rely on the wage income earned by other members of their immediate or extended family. It is importantto

bear in mind that this might not be true of theentire work life of workers we spoke to. Women included in this 'group'are those who did not participate in or seek wage work in the three months preceding the survey. It can be said that for this group, 'NREGA work' is the only means of earning a wage for a mixture of social, economic and physiological reasons (such as illness or weakness which resulted in no work being offered to them by a private employer). In cases where they chosenot to take up local work if it was not worth their while for the amount of money they would have earned, it can be argued that there would have been additional social reasons why they excluded themselves or were forced to exclude themselves from seeking local wage work from private employers. It is probable for instance that the relatively high statutory minimum wage encourages their participation in the NREGA.

15 And as a corollary they would have considered NREGA work specifically because of the difference between the statutory minimum wage (paid under the NREGA) and the local (agricultural or non-agricultural) wage for female workers in their local area. Barbara Harriss-White's (2005) comments regarding low mobility of labour and the 'inability' in many cases to seek more lucrative work in neighbouring regions is pertinent here. It follows from the (lack of) 'availability of choice' to choose or not to choose locally available work, that this group of women could count on other members of the household to earn a sufficientincome for the household.

16 See for instance Breman, 1996

17 See for instance Chen, 1989 and Olsen and Mehta, 2006. With regard to agricultural wage work, Chen points out

that "generally, across regions, women are paid less than men for the same agricultural operations. But the wage differentials between men and women are not uniformacross regions. The differentials, further- more, are changing: the only region in which wage differentials have declined is in the high-productivity, paddy-growing districts of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. Wage differentials have increased in the low- productivity paddy regions and the high-productivity wheat regions; a mixed pattern presents itself in the dry, coarse grain regions (in some areas the differentials have increased whereas in other areas they have remained static). In all regions, the lowerpaid off- peak season operations (weeding, preservation, processing) are dominated by women." The gender disparity in wage earned for casual work, moreover has increasedover time (See for instance Handbook of Statistical Indicators on Indian Women published by the Ministry of Women andChild Development, Government of India, 2007)

18 Breman, 1996 and Mosse et. al., 2007 for instance mention the physical and sexual vulnerabilities faced by women migrants.

19 i.e. not actively seeking wage work

20 Stated in Schedule II of the NREGA, detailing the 'conditions for guaranteed rural employment under a scheme and minimum entitlements of labourers'

21 Lungibai (Sirohi District, Rajasthan) said that this is the first time she was working for a wage and that her husband had 'allowed' her to work since work was available within the village. Similarly, Maina (Aant Panchayat, Sitapur district) states she has never worked for a wage earlier. Interestingly enough she felt that NREGA employment "has not changed her

life substantially" but went on to state that she has started sending her daughter to school as a result of this work.

22 The NREGA allows wage to be calculated on a time rate or piece rate basis. Since the wage is often calculated on a piece rate rather than time rate basis, as is typically the case in Rajasthan, workers often get less than the statutory minimum wage. The calculation of wage on a piece rate basis is dependent on a 'schedule of rates' for specific tasks done by workers.

23 Here reference is made primarily to women who had the option to make this choice and could rely on another source of income or could rely on another family member toearn a wage income.

24 See Breman, 1996;

25 as opposed to the statutory minimum of Rs. 82 in Bihar

26 Similarly, Nani Bai (Badwani District, Madhya Pradesh) said she now earns Rs. 85 (the minimum wage inMadhya Pradesh) instead of Rs. 20-25 that she earned earlier as an agricultural labourer.

27 The Government of India has a widow pension scheme which pays Rs. 200 per month; some states supplement this amount with contributions from the state budget. - to add text on who is eligible - limited number, + limited eligibility - and limited number implies that oftenpeople are unable to access the pension

28 The Rajput community is particularly conservative and for women, access to wage work is difficult andoften looked down upon.

29 See Breman 1996; Mosse 2007

30 These very same issues are highlighted by Herring

and Edwards (1983) in their study of the EmploymentGuarantee Scheme implemented since the 1970s in the west Indian state of Maharashtra. Women heads of households who Herring and Edwards spoke with stated that they consider government work under the Maharashtra EGS 'safer' and that EGS work provided by the government has led to a reduction in subtle forms of coercion and overt sexual exploitation faced by women workers (p.583)

31 Such as being provided work on demand. In many places public works are being opened by the local government on the government's own initiative with finances provided by the central ie federal government.

32 The terms 'very important', 'less important' and 'not important', which were used in the survey questionnaire are terms which may be interpreted broadly. However, the use of these terms aims at emphasising perceived benefits by workers under the NREGA. Quantification of perceived benefits on a more elaborate numerical scale was avoided and N. Nayak, R. Khera - Draft for discussion -

19 instead, reliance was placed on discussions with workers. Supplementary questions access to healthcare, nutrition and education for instance were asked but again with emphasis on discussion rather than quantification on a numerical scale.

33 Preliminary results from a survey of 320 households in one district of Andhra Pradesh also report similar results (see Ravi and Engler, 2009).

34 As Haski, a Tribal woman in Chanar Panchyat (Sirohi District) put it: "Main ghar ki mukhiya hoon"(I am the head of the household). That women have some measure ofcontrol

over savings can also be seen later in this section, where women state they spent the money on their personal needs, including medical problems and to travel to their parents' village.

35 Does this then mean that the NREGA merely serves the purpose of pushing women into private debt? Thatis not quite the point we are making. The reason why this is regarded a change for the better is that in situations of extreme deprivation these individuals might be able to access food rations that they can pay for later - rather than having to depend on the benevolence of neighbours or relatives or go without food.

36 This is not an exhaustive list of concerns related to implementation of the NREGA which affect women. Other significant concerns include the following: wage payments under the NREGA are almost everywhere calculatedon the basis of the local schedule of rates. In other words, payment is on the basis of completion of a task, per day. There is an assumption that the task assigned per day will yield a payment equivalent to the statutory minimum wage (which, in this case is a daily wage). There are significant concerns related to the calculation of payment for work commonly done by women - for instance the calculation of 'lift and lead' - i.e. after soil has been dugwomen lift the soil in a vessel and have to walk some distance to throw it, which is not compensated.

37 Under the NREGA, work is provided to workers who are listed on the job cards issued in the name of the head of the household. All adults in the family may register for work. One 'job card' is provided per household - which according to operational guidelines for the Act, is supposed to be a nuclear family. A household registered under the NREGA is entitled to

demand 'not less than 100 days' of workunder the NREGA.

38 The incentive to do this for the state government is that the funds to be spent under the NREGA are provided by the central (federal) government. Therefore, the state government is effectively using central funds for local area development without dipping into the state exchequer.

39 See Khera (2006).

40 The proportion of male NREGA workers reporting harassment is much lower - only nine percent and 11 percent on worksites where contractors were involved.

41 In the assessment of the survey team, these are fake childcare facilities which were put in place only for the benefit of the survey team.

42 See Bhatty (2006) and Narayanan (2007).

43 It might be reiterated here that the sample was drawn from lists of workers at worksites. If anything, concerns related to childcare are therefore underemphasized in the survey findings, since there are likely to have beenmany women who would not have been on the muster rolls because of the lack of childcare facilities.

44 I.e. schedule of rates for piece rate work.

45 See Vanaik and Siddhartha (2008) and Drèze and Khera (2008).

46 It is the case, however, that details of the bank payment system will differ from state to state. Some states may not have this problem.

47 Meeting of all adults of voting age in the village. Gram sabhas are expected to take decisions on what NREGA works should be implemented in the village.

To Discuss the Problem of Tribal Women (Tripura)

Ratan Debbarma

Introduction:

A woman is the nucleus of the family particularly in rural area of Tripura. She not only collects water, fuel wood, green vegetable but also plays a significant role in preserving rich culture of the tribal society. It is true that service offered by women in family is not evaluated in terms of money. When you ask her children what their mother does? Most of them instantly reply nothing. There is no recognition for their hard work. Women are ignored in matters, which are of concern to them as well. As a result, today women are the worst sufferers in the society due to drudgery, ill health, illiteracy, deprivation and humiliation. Backwardness of women is a sign of poverty and women are the worst sufferers during the period of scarcity and calamity. Lack of empowerment of women is a significant cause of poverty. The gap in policy and practice in women's empowerment is most visible when it comes to the level and kinds of violence women face in India. Despite the policies, laws and initiatives by civil society institutions, violence against women in India as well as in Tripura is widespread and the consequences for perpetrators rarely match the crime. Enforcement of laws and sentencing of perpetrators are long

and arduous processes, and the gaps in these processes are further widened by corruption.

Another gap in implementing laws and policies on violence against women is the inaccessibility of information on victim's right among rural and less educated women. Additionally, social stigma and the fear of abandonment by the family play a big role in women's and girls' ability or inability to access laws and policies to address sexual and violence.

Women's empowerment in India as well as in Tripura is heavily dependent on many different variables that include geographical location (urban/rural), educational status (caste and class), and age. Policies on women's empowerment exist at the national, state, and local (Panchayat) levels in many sectors, including health, education, economic opportunities, gender-based violence, and political participation. However, there are significant gaps between policy of advancements and participation at the community level.

Gender sensitive approach to women empowerment

- Drudgery reduction to facilitate participation in economic development
- Involvement in decision making process, identification of strategic gender needs and addressing them
- Capacity building in technical skills, information sharing and leadership development
- Formation of Self Help Groups for solidarity, awareness and motivation, addressing common problems and micro-financing
- Economic development: enhance abilities to contribute to family income, access to credit and assets and reduce economic dependence
- Staff orientation: to adopt suitable approaches to address the problems and encourage participatory development
- Gender vigilance to ensure women's participation in all fronts and access to benefits in training, entrepreneurship and activities of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)

Capacity Building

Subsequently, building of capabilities to create awareness, improve their skills, develop leadership and link with technologies, trade, financial institutions and local governments can empower them to take active part in socio-economic development at par with others. Such steps have led the community towards a literate and progressive society, directly benefitting every family and helped to bring the rural women as key players, into main stream.

With various women empowerment activities and training, there has been a significant increase in the confidence of women. They have developed mutual trust, social security, skills and access to technology and credit through their Self Help Groups and various People's Organization. The women groups have motivated the entire community to take hygiene, sanitation, family planning and health care activities with the community. Several groups have established their grain banks to ensure food security for their members. There has been increased awareness about education for children, particularly, girls. Prevention of child marriage has been an important agenda of many Self Help Groups which has been endorsed by the other sections of the community as well.

Drudgery Reduction:

The extent of burden and sufferings of the rural women in Tripura vary widely with the social and economic status, local customs, size of family and many other factors. Hence an intensive study with close interaction with tribal women can help to identify suitable solution for their problems. Based on the needs, the drudgery reduction measures introduced for tribal women include:

A) Creation of safe drinking water sources closer to their houses.
B) Maternal and child health and family welfare.
C) Strengthening of traditional health care practices.
D) Training of midwives and upgrading the skill of local healers.
E) Awareness programme on health, hygiene and sanitation.
F) Training of local youth as health guides for first aid.
G) Establishment and proper utilization anganawadis and awareness of girl education in the tribal area.

These activities have been very well appreciated and are also being encouraged by the male members of the society.

Educational problems and solutions:

In practical perspective Tripura tribes are educationally backward. As much as their advancement in the arena of education is concerned, the women folks of Tripura are unfortunately lagging behind. Most of the guardians of the tribal families are in view that their girls do not require high education as they may overtake the decisions of their husbands after marriage. As such very rare tribal girls get family support to prosecute their higher studies. Most of the Government schools under

TTAADC is not running smoothly. Some of them are without proper infrastructure and have inadequate number of teaching staff. These are the school in name but not in work. The Madhyamik result of the year 2014 has presented before us a clear picture. Among Madhyamik candidates from 16 schools like Ballukchara, Khedachara, Dharmajoy Choudury Para and Kanthan high school, not even a single candidate could succeed in the exam. The practical reason behind this disgusting result is incapability of the guardians to effort the expenses' to provide special tuition to their children as most of the people inhabiting in and around the said area are not economically sound. For the empowerment of tribal women economic development is earnestly desired. To get the successful result of those schools first of all proper infrastructure should be enhanced. The concerned authorities should think that the students of those institutions are their own children having nowhere to go for private tuition as most of them are under BPL category.

Domestic violence of tribal women and ways of solutions:

Domestic violence of women is mainly due to the evil practice of dowry system. This particular system prevails nevertheless in a tribal society. Practically, dowry reduces the bride to a commodity for sale in the marriage market. The inhuman system can not be uprooted so long women remain educationally backward and mentally unconscious. It is mentionable that once upon a time I meant 50 year back in the tribal society the groom had to give dowry his bride. And it was fixed only 150 rupees. But now a day it is in the opposite direction. Brides are giving dowry how much grooms demanded. By the wide spread awareness programme against the evil practice of dowry sys-

tem, we will be capable to abolish the practice. Due to this mass media has also the vital role to play positively. The respective police station of the concerned area should also take some initiatives to eradicate the practice from the concerned society.

College going tribal girls mostly belongs to middle class families, as a result they can not adjust themselves with the high status life style of the urban people in order to satisfy the expenses, thereby they become victims of sexual harassment in the long run. Not only these, some of tribal women are seen to use their fellow women friends as a source of their entertainment mentally and physically in the name of love affairs but in the long run they betray them. So this fact becomes an instance of undesirable reputation of those women which may create hindrance in case of having marriage life and in later life too. It will be better if the state Govt. set up commission for tribal women in Tripura to eradicate domestic violence of tribal women.

Social Problem and its Solution

In our own tribal society all the women are directly or indirectly the worst victims because the tribals believed in superstition. Some women are supposed to possess supernatural power i.e., having power to harm others. Those women are considered to be witches in our society. They have no safety and security as a result they are unable to lead their lives peacefully in the society. In these age of science and technology also we, the tribal people can not rely on scientific reasons regarding the illness and death of human being. It is nothing but a shameful to remain ignorant. To overcome this superstitious belief, scientific and rational outlook should be developed among the indigenous people through massive social awareness programmes.

Economically unsound and its solutions:

Many tribal women living in rural areas consider the production of country liquor as source of their main income. For this very reason they directly or indirectly invite the unexpected elements to take place on their sides. In lieu of making wine they may choose some other works like growing flower plants, taming domestic animal and they can engage themselves in weaving, making candles and dolls. Doing the cited jobs they also earn a huge income to run their families peacefully and smoothly. Creation of awareness among men could enlist greater support for women participation in the various development programmes. In many parts of Tripura, the men have taken a path contrary to tradition, to empower the women.

Health problems and ways of solution:

In 2014, it has been witnessed that a deadly disease called Malaria seemed to break out like epidemic in tribal remote areas and thereby many sufferers lost their lives. the wide spread of the disease was mainly due to the lack of health consciousness among the people living in hilly region of the state .In order to get rid of such deadly diseases the sons of the soil should be taught the ways to lead a life free from diseases. The health awareness through discussion, processions and advertisements must be conducted from time to time in tribal areas by the health department of the state and India Government as well.

Conclusion:

In spite of much hardship the Tripuri women are striving for the better and brighter prospects leaving their thorns of

life behind. The Central and state govt. are proceeding unitedly to strengthen the empowerment of general women and tribal women as well. Besides these NGOs are also approaching in bringing success for the same. But the outcome of their efforts is not to the level of expectation. The attainment of expected outcomes may be possible only when women folk of Tripuri tribes become educationally advanced. In matters of women empowerment the importance of helping hands of male folk can not be ignored. Their sympathetic and compassionate attitude towards their fellow women shall be in their consideration while framing and launching plans and projects in favor of tribal women. The Tripuri tribal women would not be capable of living their lives with dignity unless all non tribal and tribal men consider them as their own people belonging to the same family.

To make the general conclusion of the discussed issues and possible way of getting rid of the cited critical problems here I do emphasize widespread awareness programme in order to make themselves conscious and thereby they will come forward spontaneously. The moment the Govt. and the Non Govt. Organizations shall have to welcome them promptly and guide them to reach their own destinations successfully. And in particular I am here suggesting the preaching and execution of female education of Tripuri women to be the first and foremost preference of the Govt. With these few words I conclude my presentation of my seminar paper and thanks to all.

Gender, Development and the Status of Tribal Women : A Study of Tripura

Sumon Ali1
&
Taslim Akter

Abstract

The scheduled tribes (Tribal) constitute about 31.8% of the total population in Tripura. Moreover, this tiny north-eastern state presents a bewildering collection of tribal groups. Out of the 19 enlisted tribes found in the state, eight (i e, Tripuri, Riang, Noatia, Jamatia, Halam, Kuki, Chaima and Uchai) are regarded as the original settlers. In tribal communities, the role of women is substantial and crucial. They constitute about half the total population but in tribal society women are more important than in other social groups, because they work harder and the family economy and management depends on them. Even after industrialization and the resultant commercialization swamped the tribal economy, women continued to play a significant role. Mostly women and children do collection of minor forest products. Many also work as laborers in industries, households and construction, contributing to their family income. However, tribal women are still marginalized and deprived group in Tribal society. Gender equality among tribal groups is a complex phenomenon that needs to be addressed in the context of various issues of tribal life. Gender dimension of tribal communities of India also has a bearing on the need

for tribal development. This paper focuses on the nature and dimensions of change in the lives and status of tribal women in Tripura. The paper also focuses how the socio-economic changes during the last few decades have introduced new gender and class issues into the purportedly egalitarian society of the Tribals. The present study is based on secondary sources of data collecting from various sources.

Keywords

Gender equality; Gender discrimination; Tribal community; Development; Tribal women in Tripura.

Introduction

Tripura is a tiny, hilly and land locked state situated in North-eastern part of India and having boundaries with neighbouring country Bangladesh and it has common boundary of Assam and Mizoram. It has a geographical area of 10,491.69 sq. km. The population of our State is 36, 71,032 out of that the population belongs to Tribals is 11, 67,388 of the total population (2011 Census). The scheduled tribes (Tribal) constitute about 31.8% of the total population in Tripura. Moreover, this tiny north-eastern state presents a bewildering collection of tribal groups. There are 19 (nineteen) notified Scheduled Tribes in the state. They are Tripuri, Reang, Chakma, Jamatia, Halam, Noatia, Mog, Garo, Munda, Kuki, Lushai, Lepcha, Chaimal, Khasia, Urang, Santal, Uchai, Bhil and Bhutia. A large number of them are still following the primitive practice of shifting cultivation. In tribal communities, the role of women is substantial and crucial. They constitute about half the total population but in tribal society women are more important than in other social groups, because they work harder

and the family economy and management depends on them. Even after industrialization and the resultant commercialization swamped the tribal economy, women continued to play a significant role. Mostly women and children do collection of minor forest produce. Many also work as laborers in industries, households and construction, contributing to their family income. However, tribal women are still marginalized and deprived group in Tribal society. Gender equality among tribal groups is a complex phenomenon that needs to be addressed in the context of various issues of tribal life. Gender dimension of tribal communities of India also has a bearing on the need for tribal development. This paper focuses on the nature and dimensions of change in the lives and status of tribal women in Tripura. The paper also focuses how the socio-economic changes during the last few decades have introduced new gender and class issues into the purportedly egalitarian society of the Tribals.

Objectives of the Study: The main objectives of this paper are

1. To highlight the Gender roles among Tribal society;

2. To find out the role and status of Tribal women in development;

3. To focus on the nature and dimensions of changes in the lives of tribal women in Tripura.

Methodology: The present study has been undertaken based on secondary source of data. The Secondary data includes books, journals, newspapers, Governmental report, Census report, websites etc.

Status of Tribal Women in Tripura

The status of tribal women can be judged mainly by the roles they play in society. The status of women in any society is a significant reflection of the level of social justice in that society. Women's status is often described in terms of their level of income, employment, education, health and fertility as well as their roles within the family, the community and society. Interestingly, tribal life in Tripura is marked by some striking commonalities. For instance, the first language of over 80% of the tribal population in the state is Kok-Borok. Again, Most of tribal people have their own tribal customs and beliefs but in the broader sense of religion, they are believed to be the followers of Hinduism, the Lushai, Kuki and some people of the Garo community have retained themselves as Christians(TRCI, Govt. of Tripura). Moreover, the Mog and Chakma communities and a few people of other tribes were declared as scheduled tribes but they profess Buddhism (ibid. TRCI). Like many other tribal societies of India and Africa, the practice of shifting or 'jhum' cultivation was very widespread in Tripura until recently. Even today, Riangs, Kukis and Lushais living in the hills have not departed from this traditional production process. There is also some homogeneity regarding marriage rules, property rights, food and drinking habits, dress patterns, housing patterns and other such activities among different tribes (Bhadra 1996: 168).

Gender roles in Tribal society

Gender is a constitutive element in all social relations. The term 'gender' refers to the social classification of men and women as 'masculine and feminine' (Oakley, 1972: 16) and their expected behavior based on their assigned social roles (Basin,

2000). The different roles that are ascribed to men and women are socially and culturally determined and influenced by traditional practices, institutions, customs and beliefs. Most of the societies in northeast India are patriarchal society where men dominate and exercise control over most of the resources and are considered superior to women.

So far as the question of gender roles and more particularly the place and image of women is concerned, in spite of being followers of the Hindu tradition of patriarchy, Tribals of Tripura have provided a place of considerable socio-economic importance to their womenfolk. Women constitute the economic backbone in each of the tribal communities. Several studies on tribal women of north-east India reveal that like all hill women, they are physically and socially fitted to lead a life of extreme hardship. Social relations between the sexes in most cases are easy and natural; men and women generally meet freely on equal basis. In tribal communities, the role of women is substantial and crucial. Mostly women and children do collection of minor forest produce. Many also work as laborers in industries, households and construction, contributing to their family income. Despite exploitation by contractors and managers, tribals are more sincere and honest than non-tribals. However, tribal women face problems and challenges in getting a sustainable livelihood and a decent life due to environmental degradation and the interference of outsiders.

Gender Equity and Empowerment of Tribal Women

Empowerment of women is one of the concepts that have developed in connection with improving their status. Empowerment includes higher literacy levels, education, better healthcare, equal ownership of productive resources, increased

participation in economic and commercial sectors, awareness of rights and responsibilities, improved standards of living, self-reliance, self-esteem and selfconfidence. Raising the status of tribal women is not just a moral imperative but also a strategic one. Within the framework of a democratic policy, our laws, development policies, plans and programmes have aimed at women's advancement in different spheres. In recent years, the empowerment of women has been recognized as a central issue in determining their status. Tribal women, while being a disadvantaged and vulnerable group are, nevertheless, better placed, in many respects, than their counterparts in the general population and are, in certain areas, more empowered. They do not suffer segregation or lower status.

Development and Status of Tribal Women:

The strategy for tribal development, and specially women, needs improvement, betterment, development and upliftment to effect their empowerment. Tribal women have adjusted themselves to live a traditional life style in the local environment and follow occupations based on natural resources. Undoubtedly, the programmes, oriented towards the empowerment of tribals, particularly women, have improved their socio-economic conditions and status. However, there are wide variations across regions and tribes in terms of work participation, sex ratio, economic productivity and social life. The impact of development planning needs to be evaluated in terms of desired and unanticipated consequences. The development process should be perceived as an involvement and reorganization mechanism of not only the socio-economic system but the entire eco-system.

One major consequence of these developments is the

growing gender disparity among tribals, a phenomenon quite un- heard of in the traditional set up. As such, settled or plough cultivation has marginalised the traditional role of women in agriculture because they now face a taboo on handling the plough. On the other hand, too much crowding on the restricted amount of jhum land available forced particularly those Jhumias who live in remote forests to eke out a bare living. Both these factors have negatively influenced the work participation rates, particularly among rural tribal women.

Conclusion

The above discussion clarifies the concept about the gender, development and status of Tribal women in Tripura. It is clear that gender equality among tribal groups is a complex phenomenon that needs to be addressed in the context of various issues such as family structure, fertility, child mortality, literacy, sex-ratio, labor force participation, economic worth generated within the household, religion, culture, and exposure to the mainstream population. It is tempting to conclude that general development programs are sufficient for the reduction of levels of gender inequality, this study does not necessarily show this to be the case. inequality. With regard to policy formulation, the present study shows that for the scheduled tribe groups in India, gender equality should be conceptualized as an integral part of the development process. The role of tribal women is important but their socio-economic development is poor. More needs to be done. The problems of tribal women and tribals are largely common. Lastly we would suggest some recommendations to strengthen and empower tribals as well as tribal women are:

- For social justice, it is needed to eliminate all types of

discrimination against the socially disadvantaged groups with the strength of Constitutional Commitments, legislative support ,affirmative action, awareness generation, conscientisation of target groups and change in the mind -set of the people.

♦ The government should focus empowerment of scheduled tribe women and allocate separate funds throughout the five years plan. Health, education and nourishment should be the selected key focus areas, besides; women should be provided with sample opportunities for economic development, based upon the traditional skills, women should also be provided additional skills for value additions to the produces.

♦ The tribal women workers, who are engaged in agriculture, construction, brick klin etc, are un-organized; the government should protect their labour rights. And the government should make special allocation for implementation of labour laws for the scheduled area to prevent the exploitation of the workers.

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Empowerment of Tribal Women in North East: Issues and Challenges

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Abstract

Empowerment has been used to connect research, theory and practices. Empowerment of tribal women in northeast is essentially very important and its practical implementation in all aspect is also necessary. Empowerment has to be specially cultivated for upliftment of education, economic, social and political status of tribal women, generally for the traditionally underprivileged ones, in the society. It involves the building up of a society wherein in the tribal women and its people can breathe without the fear of oppression, exploitation, apprehension, discrimination and the general feeling of persecution which goes with being a women in a traditionally male dominated structure as well as in presences of outsiders. Such an approach provides the women with a constitutional platform to stand up to men, to raise their voice on issues concerning women oppression, subjugation and other related issues and thus in effect, providing them with an identity and in addition to providing a much needed forum to seek redressal of problems directly affecting them : the true essence of empowerment.

The present paper attempts to look into the dynamism of

the process whereby tribal women empowerment is achieved being the indigenous people of the place. The study is based on the issues and challenges and on primary evidence collected from tribal women of different categories, such as elder women, employed, unemployed and youths of various places of Tripura and other north eastern states to analyze WHETHER participation of tribal women DOES IN FACT translate into concrete women empowerment in its own states.

The study reveals that although tribal women have proved that they have enormous potential in restoring and reconstructing tribal community, but today they face extreme forms of social exclusion and discrimination in the public spheres of life. Their innocence and simplicity have been misused by the mainstream communities. For a sustainable tribal community development, there is need to give them grass root level training and orientation in order to reinforce their motivation whatsoever.

Keywords

Empowerment, issues, challenges, evidences.

Introduction

In general empowerment refers to greater access to power by underprivileged or vulnerable segments of the population. In its initial judicial meaning "to empower is to give somebody the power or authority to do something".

Empowerment of tribal women is a challenging issue in the present scenario. Without empowering tribal women, meaningful inclusive growth of the society and its own states is not possible. Empowerment of tribal women can be measured through the power they have over economic resources to earn income and their per capita income, access to education, access

and availability of professional opportunities and participation in economic decision making and their access to political opportunities. Access to education is the key for economic, social and political empowerment of tribal women. Tribal women empowerment mainly through education is a possible means for inclusive growth. It has direct impact on various aspects of tribal development.

Northeast India comprises of the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim. It is one of the most ethnically and linguistically diverse regions in India. The region has a high concentration of tribal population in the hilly states of Mizoram, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and also in the hill districts of the state of Manipur, Assam and Tripura [1-10]. Each tribe has its own distinct historical identity, linguistic, cultural practices and life styles that are carried forward from generation to generation [11- 15]. About 600 Tribal communities resides in north east with different socio-economic background [16-18].

The scheduled tribes are often perceived as backward people, who live in remote and isolated regions and engage in primitive occupations, in tribal communities, the role of women is substantial and crucial. They constitute about half the total population but in tribal society women are more important than in other social groups, because they work harder and the family economy and management depends on them. They have remained as educationally, culturally, economically and socially deprived sections. Scheduled Tribes Women play a very significant role in their social, cultural, economic and religious ways of life and they are considered as a development factor in their family as

well as society. But they are still lagging far behind in the different walks of life like education, employment, political, social position, good health and empowerment etc [19-21].

The present paper attempts to look into the dynamism of the process whereby tribal women empowerment is achieved being the indigenous people of the place. The study is based on the issues and challenges and on primary evidence collected from tribal women of different categories, such as elder women, employed, unemployed and youths of various places of Tripura and other north eastern states to analyze WHETHER participation of tribal women DOES IN FACT translate into concrete women empowerment in its own states.

Tribal Women Empowerment

Empowering tribal women is to give them the power or authority to do something to increase their control over the decisions that affect their lives both within and outside the household. Tribal Women are a major force behind people's participation, in the life of society today, not only do they comprise the majority of those excluded from participation but they play a leading role in the emergence of groups, organizations and movement, worldwide and are becoming increasingly active in their communities, governments and the international arena. Women gain greater share of control over many resources such as knowledge, information, ideas including financial resources that involved access to money and control over decision making in the home, community, society and nation through empowerment. Empowerment in the context of women's development is a way of challenging and overcoming barriers in a women's life through which she enhances her ability to shape her life and environment. It is an active, multidimensional process, which enables

women to realize her full identity and power in all spheres of life.

Field survey: Opinion regarding women empowerment of different tribes

Here the paper examines the respondent's responses regarding whether empowerment has taken place in all aspects including their political carrier or not, realizing them the true essence of empowerment. And only 25 % respondents said that they have empowered and another 75% respondents said that they were not empowered (in case of Tripura sate). Whereas in the other sates of north east 60 % have respondents said they have been empowered and another 40 % were not empowered. The field study reveals that the majority of the respondents were empowered after entering to politics, in the field of social, economic, educational and psychological way. Referring to the opinion of the people, it clearly shows that the tribes in Tripura state have to be given more opportunities without being discriminated and misused.

Source of empowerment: reference to Tripura state

The information regarding what are the sources of empowerment of respondents. Different opinion collected from the respondents regarding the sources of empowerment as analyzed in table No 1.

Table No 1: Survey: Sources of empowerment of tribal women in Tripura

Sl.No.	Sources	Numbers	Percentage
1	Govt. facilities	20	-
2	Financial benefit	70	-
3	Education	50	1
4	NGO	03	-

5	Awareness programme through media	10	1
6	Political opportunity	10	1
7	Training	51	5
	Total	214	8

Source: Field survey

The table above (table.1) shows that, according to the views of women of different tribes, regarding sources of empowerment, no government facilities were provided for empowerment to the women, , 0 % (70) respondents said financial benefit, 1% (50) respondents said education, 0% (3) respondent said NGO, 1% (10) respondents said awareness programme by media, 5 % (10) respondents said training, 1%(13) respondents said political opportunity. The whole data in the table reveals that the main sources come from education, awareness by the media, training and political opportunity.

Source of empowerment: other north-eastern states

The information regarding what are the sources of empowerment of respondents. Different opinion collected from the respondents regarding the sources of empowerment as ana-

Sl.No.	Sources	Numbers	Percentage
1	Govt. facilities	10	5
2	Financial benefit	10	2
3	Education	15	7
4	NGO	02	1
5	Awareness programme through media	5	1
6	Political opportunity	10	1
7	Training	10	5
	Total	62	22

Source : Field survey

The table above (table.2) shows that, according to the views of women of different tribes of other northeast, regarding sources of empowerment, 5% (10) respondents said government facilities , 2 % (10) respondents said financial benefit, 7% (15) respondents said education, 1% (2) respondent said NGO, 1% (5) respondents said awareness programme by media, 5 % (10) respondents said training, 1%(13) respondents said political opportunity. The whole data in the table reveals that the main sources come from the entire source as shown above.

Now on comparing the data's , it clearly shows that Tripura state is lacking far more behind other north eastern states in empowering of tribal women in all aspects.

Empowerment of tribal women of different tribes in the family:

According to the opinion collected regarding the issues and challenges faced by women of different tribes of northeast is the empowerment in the family. From the views and data, it reveals the empowerment of women taken place in their family. 20 % respondents said that, women empowerment take place in their family and 80 % respondents said that restrictions are made in certain cases. This response includes in education, decision making, financial, social and politically aspect. Few respondents's also revealed that due to the participation in the panchayats, empowerment in their family is created. Therefore due to the issues such as illiteracy, economic background etc, the empowerment process has not taken place in their family, depriving women in one way or the other.

Issues and challenges

Empowerment in the society is a very significant reflection of the level of social justice in that society. Women's status is often described in terms of their level of income, employment, education, health, fertility and political as well as their roles within the family, the community and society and for this empowerment is very necessary. In tribal communities, the role of women is substantial and crucial. They constitute about half the total population but in tribal society women are more important than in other social groups, because they work harder and the family economy and management depends on them. Even after industrialization and the resultant commercialization swamped the tribal economy, women continued to play a significant role. Collection of minor forest produce is done mostly by women and children. Many also work as laborers in industries, households and construction, contributing to their family income. Despite exploitation by contractors and managers, tribals are more sincere and honest than non tribals. However, tribal women face problems and challenges in getting a sustainable livelihood and a decent life due to environmental degradation and the interference of the outsiders. The strategy for tribal development, and specially women, needs improvement, betterment, development and upliftment to effect their empowerment. Tribal women have adjusted themselves to live a traditional life style in the local environment and follow occupations based on natural resources. Undoubtedly, the programmes, oriented towards the empowerment of tribals, particularly women, have improved their socio-economic conditions.

Another challenge to the tribal women is that they are

still not much exposed to the outside world and are confined to their community. If we closely analyze functioning of educated tribals, we notice two traits of transformation. One group of educated tribal argues that tribals should reform themselves with the mainstream society. The other group of tribals wants to maintain its tribal identity. Most of the primitive tribes still live in hills, dense forest with difficult terrain and many a times, it is difficult to reach them because of lack of road and transport facilities. It is a challenge to provide education to tribals and setting up school and institutions in small, scattered and remote tribal habitations. High school drop-out rate among tribals is another reason for their lagging behind in education. The issues and challenges in tribal education can be categorized as external, internal, socio-economic and psychological. The external constraints are related to issues at levels of policy, planning, and implementation while internal constraints are with respect to education system, content, curriculum, pedagogy, and medium of instruction, etc. The third set of problems relates to social, economic, and cultural background of tribals and psychological aspects of first generation learners. It is important to address the problems of low literacy among tribal women severely at national level and resolve the peril through confident and effectual means.

For the development socio-economic of any tribe community, the active participation of women is also essential. In a social set up like northeastern states, their participation has to be ensured through tangible measures, taken at various levels, which result in their empowerment in the real sense. Empowerment of women is one of the concepts that has to be developed and chance must be given in connection with improving

their status. Empowerment includes higher literacy levels, education, better healthcare, equal ownership of productive resources, increased participation in economic and commercial sectors, awareness of rights and responsibilities, improved standards of living, self-reliance, self-esteem and self- confidence. Raising the status of tribal women is not just a moral imperative but also a strategic one. Within the framework of a democratic policy, our laws, development policies, plans and programmes have aimed at women's advancement in different spheres. In recent years, the empowerment of women has been recognized as a central issue in determining their status. Tribal women, while being a disadvantaged and vulnerable group are, nevertheless, better placed, in many respects, than their counterparts in the general population and are, in certain areas, more empowered. They do not suffer segregation or lower status. This is reflected in their higher sex-ratio vis-à-vis the general population. The child sex-ratio for tribal women also compares favorably vis-à-vis the general population, However, the negative practices of the mainstream population seem to have started percolating to the tribal population as well. The child female to male sex ratio shows a decline while in areas such as education and health tribal women lag behind significantly.

Thus tribal women need to face lots of challenges in the society which is the main reason behind their empowerment and to overcome all these issues and challenges, the problem associated with education of tribal women needs immediate attention and early resolution.

Recommendations for empowering the tribal women

The role of Tribal women is important but their socio-economic development is poor.The problems of tribal women

and tribals are largely common. Suggestions and recommendations to strengthen and empower tribals as well as tribal women are:

› Establishment of tribal residential schools for girl students.

› Establishment of schools and colleges in tribal areas especially the tribal dominated blacks.

› Supporting the tribal students with special scholarships, fellowships, hostel facilities, remedial coaching and other measures and particularly for the girl students.

› Along with the state government, NGOs, voluntary organization should frame genuine programmes and policies for the educational development of tribal women.

› Support the institutions located in border, hilly, remote areas and educationally backward areas.

› Teachers in the rural areas should be appointed for conducting awareness campaigns among the parents about the importance of women education.

› Government and civil societies should create awareness among the tribal people about the government programmes, needs and advantages of the education among tribal women.

› Skill training programmes have to be designed and organized for school dropout women.

› Create awareness that education only should make the tribal women economically independent, solution to their life problems and make their life better.

› The tribal teachers who understand the tribal language and culture must be posted in tribal schools.

› In order to motivate the girls, their families about the value of the education the tribal teachers should be given in-

centives.

Research point of view

1. The participation rate of Tribal women in the workforce is much higher than that of other women in the general population. The Government has not formulated separate empowerment policies for scheduled dribe women.

2. The studies have not undertaken empirical studies on measurement of scheduled tribe women's poverty, employment, food insufficiency, and unpleasant health.

3. There is also found that majority of the scheduled tribe women have less position than tribal men.

4. Scheduled tribe women's empowerment has not been adequately and scientifically researched.

5. Due to patriarchal structure women and girls have restricted to access education, access to health facilities, and lower decision-making power, and experience higher rates of violence.

6. The constitution of India is enriched with several provisions for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes to safeguard and promote their cultural, social, educational, and economic interests in order to bring them in the mainstream of the nation. But these safeguard are unsuccessful due to male dominated society and lack interest to utilize in their life and also due to the presence of other outsiders and communities.

7. There is a need to put more attention on educational aspects of scheduled tribes women, education in only one determination to motivate them for future life.

8. Some other study have also analyzed the problems of tribal women empowerment and indicated the educational, economical, employment, health are the main components to help

them to achieve the gender equality tribal society.

9. Tribal women have adjusted themselves to live a traditional life style in the local environment and follow occupations based on natural resources. That means tribal women contribute immensely to the tribal agriculture.

10. In modern India, scheduled tribe women used the natural resources and natural habitat for commercial purposes and thus their potential to damage the life sustenance of goods from the forest and its water bodies must be taken care of.

Conclusion

Tribal women empowered are a challenging issue in the present scenario especially in northeastern states of India. There are significant gaps between policy advancements and actual empowerment of tribal women. It should need to increase the awareness about right and duties of tribal women to get the equal status at the state and national levels, despite existing reservations for women. As a responsible citizen, scheduled tribe women have a duty to acquire the education to understand their rights and duties towards their society, states and country. Because it is related to her own empowerment, this also implies a broad social consensus about the basic rights and opportunities that tribal should enjoy and the responsibilities that should be taken by different individual and social groups. It may also be remarked that tribal women must get greater social and political exposure so that they can be dynamic in active politics. If they take active participation, they can contribute a lot to the all round development of their regions. They must be provided with better education facilities and offered necessary training at all the levels. Efforts must be made to bring about a thorough transformation in their attitude and

mindset. The process of empowerment of Tribal women through political representation also becomes meaningful and realistic.

Mahatma Gandhi rightly commented that "when a man is educated, an individual is educated; when women is educated, a family and a country are educated"

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Empowerment of Tribal Women through Literacy in India with Special Reference to Tripura

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Abstract

Education plays a great role in maintaining the status of Tribal women in the society. Through education a women is able to acquire knowledge, self confidence, dignified living and self attainment. It plays an important role in eradication of poverty of the Tribal society. Without equal progress of both men and women the tribal society cannot make all round development. Ignorance and poverty go hand in hand and for this, literacy is the only weapon to break this vicious circle. The present study has been taken up to deal with the issue of tribal women and is concentrated on development of tribal women through literacy. Issues related to enrolment, percentage of dropouts, promotion rates of tribal women in the elementary, secondary, higher secondary and higher education were discussed. Attempt has been made to highlight the level of literacy reached among tribal women of the country and state respectively. Several recommendations and suggestions are made to improve the systems of education for the tribal women. It provides an overview of trends and issues, explores their ethical dimensions, and tries to identify relevant strategies to promote tribal women of the state of Tripura towards a better fu-

ture. The study is based on secondary data obtained from various texts, reference books, internet and various published journals and reports. The paper provides a framework which could serve as the reference model in the further study of Tribal Women in Tripura.

Key Words

Tribal, Women, Education, enrolment, dropouts and promotion.

Introducation

Tripura, a hilly state in the north-eastern region of India is the homeland of different tribes. Altogether there are 19 (nineteen) tribes in the State. The third-smallest state in the country covers 10,491 square kilometer (4,051 sq mi) and is bordered by Bangladesh to the north, south, and west, and the Indian states of Assam and Mizoram to the east. In 2011 the state had 3,671,032 residents, constituting 0.3% of the country's population. Indigenous communities, known in India as scheduled tribes, form about 30 per cent of Tripura's population. The Kokborok speaking Tripuri people are the major group among 19 tribes and many sub tribes. The Bengali people form the ethno-linguistic majority in Tripura. 19 recognized STs from 1981 to 2011 census is given below:

PROFILE OF TRIBAL POPULATION IN TRIPURA :

Sl. No.	Name of the Tribes	Population(Census Years)			
		1981	1991	2001	2011
1.	Tripuri/Tripura	3,30,872	4,61,531	5,43,848	5,92,255
2.	Reang	84,003	1,11,606	1,65,103	1,88,220
3.	Jamatia	44,501	60,824	74,949	83,347
4.	Noatia	7,182	4,158	6,655	14,298

5. Uchai	1,306	1,637	2,103	2,447
6. Kuki	5,501	10,628	11,674	10,965
7. Halam	28,969	36,499	47,245	57,210
8. Lushai	3,734	4,910	4,777	5,384
9. Bhutia	22	47	29	28
10. Lepcha	106	111	105	157
11. Khashia	457	358	630	366
12. Chakma	34,797	96,096	64,293	79,813
13. Mog	18,231	31,612	30,385	37,893
14. Garo	7,297	9,360	11,180	12,952
15. Munda/Kaur	7,993	11,547	12,416	14,544
16. Santhal	2,726	2,736	2,151	2,913
17. Orang	5,217	6,751	6,223	12,011
18. Bhil	838	1,754	2,336	3,105
19. Chamal	18	26	226	549
20. Generic	0	0	7,098	48,356
Total	5,83,770	8,53,345	9,93,426	11,66,813

Objective :

To review the status of Tribal women in Tripura particularly on

1. To study the status of Tribal women in terms of literacy in Tripura
2. To study the gender disparity in education among ST.
3. To suggest measures for improvement of Tribal education in Tripura.

Development of Education in Tripura :

In ancient Tripura there is no practical infrastructural facility in education system. Before 1931 A.D. no better educational condition was present in Tripura. Only for educating

the boys, the first school named Umakanta Academy was opened in the state in 1891. The first girls' school named Maharani Tulshibati Balika Vidyalaya, was established in 1894. On 1st April 1979 the Department of Education trifurcated into 3 (three) Directorates viz. Directorate of Higher Education, Directorate of School Education & Directorate of Social Welfare & Social Education. By the last part of 1989 the Directorate of Higher Education was again splited and another Directorate namely Directorate of Youth Affairs & Sports was created. Since then the Department of Education (Higher) is entrusted with the task of providing opportunities to the students of the State for pursuing higher studies in the field of general and technical education. Tripura made substantial progress in the expansion of literacy and schooling in the 1990s. In 2001, the literacy rate of persons above the age of 6 years was 73% in Tripura, 63% in India and 65% in the North East. In Tripura expenditure on general education accounted for nearly half the total expenditure on social sectors. In 2002-03, expenditure on education constituted 7% of GSDP. In 2003, per capita expenditure on General Education was Rs. 1,413/- in Tripura which was more than twice the average for the 14 most populous states (Rs.538/-) Per capita expenditure on education increased steadily between 1993-94 and 2002-03 (Source: Economic Review of Tripura 2010-11)

Educational Status of Tribal Women

The educational status of tribal women in the state is comparatively lower to men. As per 2011 census the average literacy rate of the state is 87.22% among the tribal is 56.50%. The

average female literacy rate of the state is 64.90% and the tribal women was 44.60%. Let us see some of the indicator of considering the status of tribal women in terms of education in the state.

Gross Enrolment Ratio of ST Students

The gross enrolment ratio of students among tribal boys and girls as per 2011 census is given below in table 1 and 2 for school education and under graduate level

Table-1: Gross Enrolment Ratio of ST as per 2011 in Tripura

Percentage of S T Population 2011 Census	Primary Level			Upper Primary Level			Secondary Level			Higher Secondary Level		
31.80%	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
	39.78	39.67	39.73	37.14	35.71	36.44	35.82	32.64	34.27	24.34	22.76	23.65

Source: U-DIZE 2013-14

The table-1 depicts the level of enrolment of both tribal girls and boys in ratio. No much difference is seen at the primary level on the proportion of enrolment between girls and boys. At the upper Primary level the girls' enrolment ratio is 35.71 and boys 37.14, which is lower by 1.43 percent to boys. At the secondary level girls are 32.64 and boys 35.82; here the girls are lower to boys in terms of enrolment ratio by 3.18 percent. At the higher secondary level also the girls are lower to boys by 1.58 percent. The overall scenario of the enrolment ratio depicts the decline of girls' enrolment compared to boys at the upper stages subsequently.

Table-2: Enrolment of ST students in General Degree Colleges for the academic Year 2014-15

Sl. No.	COLLEGE	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL	Female %
1	MBB College	1245	236	1481	15.94
2	Ramthakur College	95	45	140	32.14
3	BBM College	462	142	604	23.51
4	NSM, Udaipur	392	204	596	34.23
5	AMBSM, Amarpur	112	50	162	30.86
6	ICVC, Belonia	504	194	698	27.79
7	MMDC, Sabroom	86	41	127	32.28
8	KNM, Sonamura	40	10	50	20.00
9	DDMC, Khowai	373	264	637	41.44
10	**GDC, Kamalpur**	**116**	**141**	**257**	**54.86**
11	GDC, Dharmanagar	247	235	482	48.76
12	RM, Kaliasahar	201	117	318	36.79
13	**Ambedkar,Fatikray**	**18**	**34**	**52**	**65.38**
14	GDC, Khumulwng	357	233	590	39.49
15	GDC, Gandacherra	123	27	150	18.00
16	GDC,Longtrai Valley	90	30	120	25.00
17	RTM, Bishalgarh	37	11	48	22.92
18	SVM, Mohanpur	52	20	72	27.78
19	GDC, Teliamura	95	48	143	33.57
20	GDC,Santir Bazaar	26	18	44	40.91
21	GDC, Kanchanpur	40	10	50	20.00
22	**Holy Cross, Agartala**	**176**	**235**	**411**	**57.18**
	TOTAL	**4887**	**2345**	**7232**	**32.43**

Source: Department of Higher Education, Tripura, Profile 2014-15

From the above given table no.2 we can see the level enrolment among tribal girls and boys at the under graduate level. The overall percentage of girls' enrolment in 22 different General Degree colleges of Tripura is 32.43 compared to that of boys. Except three colleges viz. Govt. Degree College

Kamalpur, Ambedkar college at Fatikray and Holy Cross College at Agartala, in the remaining 19 general degree colleges we find girls' enrolment below 50% compared to boys'. The lowest percentage of girls' enrolment is seen at MBB College, which is the most renowned college in the capital with only 15.94%. Girls' enrolment percentage in every 19 different respective general degree colleges is lower to boys'.

Academic Performance of Scheduled Tribe (Male and Female)

The academic performance of tribal girls and boys at Madhyamik Examination and Higher Secondary (+2 Stage) under Tripura Board of Secondary Education are discussed below

Gender wise statistics of Madhyamik Examination-2014 ST (Regular)

Table-3

Gender	Appeared	1st Division	2nd Division	3rd Division	Total passed	% of pass
Male	4773	73	287	2009	2369	49.63
Female	4054	70	214	1521	1805	44.52
Total	8827	143	501	3530	4174	47.29

Source: Tripura Board of Secondary Education Result-2014

From table-3, ST gender wise statistics of Madhyamik Examination result 2014, we find the pass percentage of male students is 49.63 and that of female is 44.52. Here the male passed percentage is higher than female with 5.11%. Comparatively the number of 1st division candidates of both male and female is 0.09% and 1.72% respectively. Subsequently the percentage of students in 2nd division of both male and female is 6.01% and 5.2% respectively. The overall percentage of 1st division is only 1.62%. The percentage of mark for 1st division is 60% and only 1.62 % is above 60%, the rest 98.38% is

below the given benchmark of the state education board. The percentage of pass is also below 50% i.e. only 47.29%. Among 4773 number of male candidates who appeared in the Madhyamik Examination only 73 students secured above 60% and among female candidate out of 4054 only 70 secured above 60% of marks. From the table no. 3 it is clear that the overall performance level of Tribal students in Madhyamik Examination is very poor for both male and female.

Gender wise Higher Secondary (+2 Stage) Examination Result for ST Category- 2014

Table-4

Gender	Appeared	1st Division	2nd Division	3rd Division	Total passed	% of pass
Male	1561	22	174	782	978	62.65
Female	1172	22	129	620	771	65.78
Total	2733	44	303	1402	1749	63.99

Source: Tripura Board of Secondary Education Result-2014

In table - 4 gender wise higher secondary (+2 stage) examination result for ST category -2014 we find the male percentage is 62.65 and that of female is 65.78, here the female percentage is higher than male in terms of percentage of passed canditates. In case of appeared candidate the female candidate is lower than male. In terms of divisions, only 22 male students stood in first division out of 1561 appeared candidates, which is only 1.04% and in second division 174 out of 1561, i.e. 11.14%. Subsequently in female, only 22 stood first division among 1172, in percentage it is only 1.87% and in second division 129 out of 1172, which is only 11%. The total percentage of both male and female in first division is 1.60% and 11.06% in second divisions. The given data result explains the level of quality education among the Scheduled Tribes of the state for 2014 session. The percentage level of students who stood above 60% benchmark of the State Higher Secondary Education Board is only 1.6%. The rest 98.04% is below 60% in aggregate.

The following table shows the number of Schedule Tribes (ST) students at Graduate level by district in 2012-13.

Table-5: Number of ST Graduates as per 2012-13 record

District	Boys	Girls	Total	Female Less by Numbers	% of Female Graduates compared to Male
West	2065	1525	3590	**540**	42.47
Khowai	455	360	815	**95**	44.17
North	207	94	301	**113**	31.22
Unokoti	168	113	281	**55**	40.21
Dhalai	253	141	394	**112**	35.78
Sepahijala	89	27	116	**62**	23.27
Gomati	384	179	563	**205**	31.79
South	571	223	794	**348**	28.08
TOTAL	4192	2662	6854	**1530**	38.83

Source: Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Tripura, Agartala (2012-13)

Source: Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Tripura, Agartala (2012-13)

The table no. 5 shows the level of tribal graduates in 8 different districts of Tripura. The number of female graduates compared to male is low in all the districts of the state. West district has the highest number of graduate candidates compared to other districts of the state. Sepahijala has the least number of graduate candidates which is only 116 in total with girls and boys candidates to 27 and 89 respectively.

Factors Affecting Tribal Women Education :

Access to education for girls in some of the rural interior poor tribal families does not only rely on proximity of schools. Access to education is part of a larger structural concern, including the practice of son preference, which creates inherent discriminatory practices. With regard to son preference, boys are being sent to English medium schools and girls in Bengali medium. In some poor families girls are not even encouraged to attend schools even after their admissions especially in the interior hilly villages. Poverty and lack of awareness of the parents also contributes to poor educational status of tribal women in Tripura. the Education initiatives, therefore, cannot rely solely on building educational infrastructure, but also need to address some of the root causes of discrimination against women and girls which affect the decisions made by parents.

Suggestions :

- ò Govt. run Residential English medium schools should be promoted in the rural tribal areas.
- ò Strong monitoring should be carried out to asses the level of development in education in the tribal habited areas.
- ò More studies should be carried out on the problem of tribal education in the state.
- ò Teacher student ratio should be maintained in the rural schools. There should be more coaching centers for the dropout students and strict monitoring should be carried out to encourage ST students in their studies.
- ò Motivational and career guidance programmes should be organized for the Tribal students to encourage them in their education and assist them through proper counselling and guidance.

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A Review on the Status of Tribal Women in Tripura

Daniel Debbarma

Abstract

Tripura is considered as one of the most fast growing states among the Northeastern states of India. During this modern era of development, the empowerment level of Tribal women is comparatively very low compared to other states of the region. The participation level of the tribal women in developmental sectors remains very meagre and vague due to various factors. And for the development of a society there is need for equitable and balanced progress of both men and women equally. This paper is an attempt to explain those factors that are affecting Tribal women of the state and suggests measures of possible strategies for their empowerment. In this paper, the status of Tribal women is determined in terms of education, health, social, economic and legal factors. These factors are also vitally interlinked with the concepts of power and position. With this perspective, the present paper is trying to look into the different aspects that shape up the status of Tribal women in Tripura.

Keywords

Tribal Women, Status, Factors, Legal, Health, social, economic and Education.

Introducation

Women's empowerment in India is heavily dependent on many different variables that include geographical location (urban/rural), educational status, social status (caste and class), and age. Policies on women's empowerment exist at the national, state, and local (Panchayat) levels in many sectors, including health, education, economic opportunities, gender-based violence, and political participation. However, there are significant gaps between policy advancements and actual practice at the community level. In Tripura, the impact of the patriarchal structure can be seen in both tribal and non-tribal community. Women (both urban and rural) who have some level of education have higher decision making power in the household and the community. Furthermore, the level of women's education also has a direct implication on maternal mortality rates, and nutrition and health indicators among children.

Tripura, once a princely state acceded to the Indian Union as a 'C' category State on 15th October, 1949. The tribals formed the majority of the population till early part of the 1950s. The upshot of partition of India led the State through a marked demographic change following large-scale influx of non-tribals from across the border, the erstwhile East Pakistan now Bangladesh.

Initially, the State Department of Welfare for Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes was established in October, 1970 with the objectives of socio-economic development as well as remove the economic backwardness of the most under-privileged sections of the society, the Scheduled Tribe (ST) and Scheduled Caste (SC). In 1982, the State Tribal Welfare Department has been started functioning as a separate and inde-

pendent Department with a view to provide focus attention on the integrated socio-economic development of scheduled tribes and their welfare as well. The State Tribal Welfare Department has been implementing various developmental initiatives and targeted schemes in a more systematic time bound manner since its creation in 1982 and more recently, new developmental programmes and special packages for scheduled tribes are implemented to meet the growing challenges with technology and modernization.

The Scheduled Tribes population of the State was 11,66,813 in 2011 that consist about 31.8 percent of total population. Out of this, 5,88,327 were ST males and remaining 5,78,486 ST females. The Census-2011 data reveals that the overall ST literacy rate reached to 79.05 percent from earlier 56.50 percent in 2011. The ST literacy rate has significantly increased during intra-census period of 2001-2011 in the State, i.e, about 22.55 percent, which is quite impressive.

The economy of tribal people of the State is built upon agriculture which in tribal areas is mostly characterized by rainfed cultivation and shifting cultivation. The tribal farmers constitute about 30 percent of the farming community and control 37 percent of the agriculture holdings. The productivity levels are much below the level attained by their counterpart non-tribal farmers. The benchmark survey conducted in 1997 revealed that the Jhumia Tribal families account for approximately 40 percent of total tribal families in the State. Apart from practice of shifting cultivation, the main problem related to agriculture is lack of cultivable land and poor irrigation facilities.

Objective of the Study

1. To review the status of tribal women particularly on

their education, health, social, economic and legal positions (crime against women).

2. To suggest measures of possible strategies towards development and empowerment of tribal women in Tripura.

Review of Literature

A persistent effort has been made to examine the status of Tribal women in Tripura over the recent past publications of Tribal Research and Culture Institute (TRCI), Govt. of Tripura. Survey of the literature on the subject reveals that the status of Tribal women still remains underdeveloped.

Manoshi Das, Jayanta Chaudhury and Rebati Tripura (2011)[1], on "Tripura tribe- a status analysis" in their major findings stated the socio economic status of the tribes of Tripura. However the study did not focus the issues of tribal women and their status in the society.

Mohan Debbarma (2013)[2], in his article presented on the "impact of modernization on the traditional social system of the Borok people of Tripura", indicated on the tremendous impact of modernization that brought a significant change in the traditional system and identity of the Borok society particularly on the traditional marriage system, family composition, socio-administrative structure, traditional institution, belief system, patterns, weaving and knitting, food habit, health status, language, house pattern, Socio-political system, livelihood etc. He has also highlighted some of the important social elements of the Borok Community which have been directly influenced by the process of the modernization like: Borok Traditional Family, borok Kingship and terminology, Borok Traditional Marriage system, customs, property inheritance position of the elders, traditional socio-religious festivals.

socio-administrative structure etc. A major conclusion that emerged from his study was that the modernity must be dependent on tradition in which there must be continuity between the old and new so as to preserve one's identity. The discussion in the study however has more relevance to traditional social system than the status of tribal women in the state.

Babudhan Tripura (2013)[3], presented a paper on "Indigenous women empowerment through self help group: a case study of Gomati District of Tripura". In his study he emphasized the psychological, social and economic benefits of indigenous women during their participation in the SHGs. He observed that indigenous women can be empowered through the concerted application of SHG as an effective strategy and douable approach. He stressed on SHGs as one of the ways to indigenous women empowerment.

Manoshi Das (2013)[4], presented a paper on "Participation of Tribal women in Agriculture: an empirical study in the state of Tripura". The paper highlighted that more than 50% and 57% female was involved in warvesting of crops and grain extraction respectively compared to males. Women's participation was higher in vegetables, orchard plantation and fruit storage activities compared to males. Females participation was recorded more than 94% which was higher than the males in activities related to Livestock management except sale/purchase and marketing. A major conclusion that emerged from the study was that recognition of contribution of working women in the rural economy was not counted in monetary terms.

Jayanta Bhattacharjee (2014)[5], presented a paper on "Role of Tribal women in Livelihood with special reference to Ago and Farming Activities". The paper attempted to highlight the

challenges of tribal women in livelihood and other socio-economic activities. He has mentioned the role of tribal women in livelihood activities, the days of working, the neglected scenario of their status and also suggests measures of motivating initiative to be taken by the same community educated and well to do people.

The above cited literature essentially attempted to focus on the status of tribal women in Tripura and have indicated the relevant situations. In general, however, all these studies differ in their basic objectives, scope, coverage and the time frame. The findings of various studies throw light on the aspects of tribal people and their situations in terms of socio-economic factor.

Tribes of Tripura

Tripura, a hilly state in the North-Eastern region of India is the homeland of different tribes. Altogether there are 19 (nineteen) tribes in the state. The third-smallest state in the country covers 10,491 square kilometer (4,051 sq mi) and is bordered by Bangladesh to the north, south, and west, and the Indian states of Assam and Mizoram to the east. In 2011 the state had 3,671,032 residents, constituting 0.3% of the country's population. Indigenous communities, known in India as scheduled tribes, form about 30 per cent of Tripura's population. The Kokborok speaking Tripuri people are the major group among 19 tribes and many sub tribes. The Bengali people form the ethno-linguistic majority in Tripura. 19 recognized STs from 1981 to 2011 census is given below:

PROFILE OF TRIBAL POPULATION IN TRIPURA

Sl. No.	Name of the Tribes	Population(Census Years) 1981	1991	2001	2011
1.	Tripuri/Tripura	3,30,872	4,61,531	5,43,848	5,92,255
2.	Reang	84,003	1,11,606	1,65,103	1,88,220
3.	Jamatia	44,501	60,824	74,949	83,347
4.	Noatia	7,182	4,158	6,655	14,298
5.	Uchai	1,306	1,637	2,103	2,447
6.	Kuki	5,501	10,628	11,674	10,965
7.	Halam	28,969	36,499	47,245	57,210
8.	Lushai	3,734	4,910	4,777	5,384
9.	Bhutia	22	47	29	28
10.	Lepcha	106	111	105	157
11.	Khashia	457	358	630	366
12.	Chakma	34,797	96,096	64,293	79,813
13.	Mog	18,231	31,612	30,385	37,893
14.	Garo	7,297	9,360	11,180	12,952
15.	Munda/Kaur	7,993	11,547	12,416	14,544
16.	Santhal	2,726	2,736	2,151	2,913
17.	Orang	5,217	6,751	6,223	12,011
18.	Bhil	838	1,754	2,336	3,105
19.	Chamal	18	26	226	549
20.	Generic	0	0	7,098	48,356
	Total	5,83,770	8,53,345	9,93,426	11,66,813

Educational Status of Tribal Women

The educational status of tribal women in the state is comparatively lower to men. As per 2011 census the average literacy rate of the state is 87.22% among the tribal is 56.50%. The average female literacy rate of the state is 64.90% and the tribal women was 44.60%. Let us see some of the indicator of considering the status of tribal women in terms of education in the state.

Gross Enrolment Ratio of ST Students

The gross enrolment ratio of students among tribal boys and girls as per 2011 census is given below in table 1 and 2 for school education and under graduate level

Table-1: Gross Enrolment Ratio of ST as per 2011 in Tripura

Percentage of ST Population 2011 Census	Primary Level			Upper Primary Level			Secondary Level			Higher Secondary Level		
31.80%	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
	39.78	39.67	39.73	37.14	35.71	36.44	35.82	32.64	34.27	24.34	22.76	23.65

Source: U-DIZE 2013-14

The table-1 depicts the level of enrolment of both tribal girls and boys in ratio. No much difference is seen at the primary level on the proportion of enrolment between girls and boys. At the upper Primary level the girls enrolment ratio is 35.71 and boys 37.14, which is lower by 1.43 percent to boys. At the secondary level girls are 32.64 and boys 35.82; here the girls are lower to boys in terms of enrolment ratio by 3.18 percent. At the higher secondary level also the girls are lower to boys by 1.58 percent. The overall scenario of the enrolment ratio depicts the decline of girls' enrolment compared to boys at the upper stages subsequently.

Colleges for the academic Year 2014-15

Table-2: Enrolment of ST students in General Degree

Sl. No.	COLLEGE	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL	Female %
1	MBB College	1245	236	1481	15.94
2	Ramthakur College	95	45	140	32.14
3	BBM College	462	142	604	23.51
4	NSM, Udaipur	392	204	596	34.23
5	AMBSM, Amarpur	112	50	162	30.86
6	ICVC, Belonia	504	194	698	27.79
7	MMDC, Sabroom	86	41	127	32.28
8	KNM, Sonamura	40	10	50	20.00

9 DDMC, Khowai	373	264	637	41.44
10 GDC, Kamalpur	**116**	**141**	**257**	**54.86**
11 GDC, Dharmanagar	247	235	482	48.76
12 RM, Kaliasahar	201	117	318	36.79
13 Ambedkar,Fatikray	**18**	**34**	**52**	**65.38**
14 GDC, Khumulwng	357	233	590	39.49
15 GDC, Gandacherra	123	27	150	18.00
16 GDC,Longtrai Valley	90	30	120	25.00
17 RTM, Bishalgarh	37	11	48	22.92
18 SVM, Mohanpur	52	20	72	27.78
19 GDC, Teliamura	95	48	143	33.57
20 GDC,Santir Bazaar	26	18	44	40.91
21 GDC, Kanchanpur	40	10	50	20.00
22 Holy Cross, Agartala	**176**	**235**	**411**	**57.18**
TOTAL	**4887**	**2345**	**7232**	**32.43**

Source: Department of Higher Education, Tripura, Profile 2014-15

From the above given table no.2 we can see the level enrolment among tribal girls and boys at the under graduate level. The overall percentage of girls' enrolment in 22 different General Degree colleges of Tripura is 32.43 compared to that of boys'. Except three colleges viz. Govt. Degree College Kamalpur, Ambedkar collage at Fatikray and Holy Cross College at Agartala in rest of the remaining 19 general degree college we find girls enrolment below 50% compared to boys'. The lowest percentage of girls' enrolment is seen at MBB College, which is the most renowned college in the capital with only 15.94%. Girls' enrolment percentage in every 19 different respective general degree colleges is lower to boys.

Academic Performance of Scheduled Tribe (Male and Female)

The academic performance of tribal girls and boys at Madhyamik Examination and Higher Secondary (+2 Stage) under Tripura Board of Secondary Education are discussed below:

Gender wise statistics of Madhyamik Examination-2014 ST (Regular)

Table-3

Gender	Appeared	1st Division	2nd Division	3rd Division	Total passed	% of pass
Male	4773	73	287	2009	2369	49.63
Female	4054	70	214	1521	1805	44.52
Total	8827	143	501	3530	4174	47.29

Source: Tripura Board of Secondary Education Result-2014

From table-3, ST gender wise statistics of Madhyamik Examination result 2014, we find the pass percentage of male students is 49.63 and that of female is 44.52. Here the male passed percentage is higher than female with 5.11%. Comparatively the number of 1st division candidates of both male and female is 0.09% and 1.72% respectively. Subsequently the percentage of students in 2nd division of both male and female is 6.01% and 5.2% respectively. The overall percentage of 1st division is only 1.62%. The percentage of mark for 1st division is 60% and only 1.62 % is above 60%, the rest 98.38% is below the mentioned benchmark of the state education board. The percentage of pass is also below 50% i.e. only 47.29%. Among 4773 number of male candidates who appeared in the Madhyamik Examination only 73 students secured above 60% and among female candidate out of 4054 only 70 secured above 60% of marks. From the table no. 3 it is clear that the overall performance level of Tribal students in Madhyamik Examination is very poor for both male and female.

Gender wise Higher Secondary (+2 Stage) Examination Result for ST Category- 2014

Table-4

Gender	Appeared	1st Division	2nd Division	3rd Division	Total passed	% of pass
Male	1561	22	174	782	978	62.65
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Source: Tripura Board of Secondary Education Result-2014

In table - 4 gender wise higher secondary (+2 stage) examination result for ST category -2014 we find the male percentage is 62.65 and that of female is 65.78, here the female percentage is higher than male in terms of percentage of passed. In case of appeared candidate the female candidate is lower than male. In terms of divisions, only 22 male students stood in first division out of 1561 appeared candidates, which is only 1.04% and in second division 174 out of 1561, i.e. 11.14%. Subsequently in female, only 22 stood first division among 1172, in percentage it is only 1.87% and in second division 129 out of 1172, which is only 11%. The total percentage of both male and female in first division is 1.60% and 11.06% in second divisions. The given data result explains the level of quality education among the Scheduled Tribes of the state for 2014 session. The percentage level of students who stood above 60% benchmark of the State Higher Secondary Education Board is only 1.6%. The rest 98.04% is below 60% in aggregate.

The following table shows the number of Schedule Tribes (ST) students at Graduate level by district in 2012-13.

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Source: Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Tripura, Agartala (2012-13)

The table no. 5 shows the level of tribal graduates in 8 different districts of Tripura. The number of female graduates compared to male is low in all the districts of the state. West district has the highest number of graduate candidates compared to other districts of the state. Sepahijala has the least number of graduate candidates which is only 116 in total with girls and boys candidates to 27 and 89 respectively.

Status of Tribal Women in Terms of Health in Tripura

Health as defined by WHO is a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely the absence of disease.

In terms of health condition both tribals and non tribals are counted as a whole to the state statistics progress report. No much of studies are done on the health status of the Tribals particularly the women. On an overall considerable progress has been made by the State in terms of socio-demographic

parameters like birth rate, death rate and infant mortality rate etc. Talking about tribal women's health in the state, a few indicators are considered to assess their status in health.

1. Nutritional status: Majority of our tribal women are addicted to eating betel nut and alcohol consumption habit akin to men in the society and they will trade other healthy foods in order to buy the highly priced alcohol and betel nuts. If they give up the habit of drinking liquor and chewing betelnut they would definitely be able to buy fruits, vegetables and other nutritious foods to eat themselves and to give to their children. At the same time it is equally important to mention that majority of our Tribal women in the state inhabiting in the outskirt of town area specially in the interior remote hilly villages are surviving in acute poverty and they do not have enough access to income for their family. Lack of proper connectivity, income and poverty has direct influence over their nutrition.

Anaemia is a major health problem in our state and government has come up with various programmes like free distribution of Iron and Folic acid tablets for pregnant and lactating mothers and the recently launched WIFS programme for the adolescents to combat anaemia. It is the lack of education on nutrition and not choosing to eat healthy nutritious foods which is cheap and locally available that contributes to poor nutritional health of the tribal women in Tripura.

2. Morbidity and mortality rate: In our country there are many women in the reproductive age group and especially girls between the age of 15 yrs to 19 yrs who die due to prob-

lems related to child bearing. The decline in the child sex ratio (CSR) as reported by the Census of India (2011) from 945 in 2001 and further to 914 females per 1000 males in 2011- the lowest since independence - is cause for concern and urgency. The Govt. of India has introduced the RCH programme to address the problems of women in their reproductive years and even to look in to the specific problems that adolescent girls encounter by setting up the ARSH programme. Many young girls suffer grave consequences of unwanted pregnancy due to unsafe abortion, and many women and girls die when they have a home-delivery and suffer post partum complications thus escalating the MMR in our state. Almost zero awareness about sexuality and reproduction, and the hesitation to avail the current free Adolescent and reproductive health services, the contraceptive services and other MCH services provided at all Government health facilities and refusal of institutional deliveries result in high morbidity and mortality in tribal women. The most deprived tribal women are those living in the interior hillock huts abundant from proper health centers and institutions.

3. RTI and STI: RTI and STI are on the rise because of sexual promiscuity and young girls are sexually active at a very tender age. Because of their poor socio - economic condition coupled with their social and biological predisposition they have become easy prey to the flesh trade and thus are at risk of contracting RTI/STI. Our people are still unaware of the dangers posed by these diseases and they have refused to come forward to get themselves reported for RTI and STI. But the big question is - How many of our women both tribal and non tribal especially in the rural areas go for antenatal checkups and how many of them really get access to RTI/STI Checkups?

Percentage of women reporting awareness of RTI/ STI in North-Eastern states of India

From one of the studies presented by Mousumi Gogoi and Ranjan Kumar Prusty on "Reproductive Health Complications among Tribal Women in India: A Special Focus on North-East India" published in journal "Etawah Journal of Soical Sciences ISSN: 2277 3487" we can segregate the level of women reporting awareness RTI/STI between tribal and non-tribals in the region and states. The below table depicts the same.

State	Non-tribal	Tribal	Total
Assam	21.7	9.4	18.5
Arunachal Pradesh	29.8	23.3	24.5
Manipur	68.6	29.0	47.5
Meghalaya	11.1	7.4	7.6
Mizoram	29.9	46.3	45.9
Sikkim	26.7	28.8	27.7
Tripura	**41.7**	**12.9**	**28.5**
North-East Total	31.6	24.1	27.2

The above table shows the level of awareness between tribals and non - tribals in terms of RTI/STI in the North-Eastern states of India. In terms of reporting awareness on RTI/STI in Tripura it is very clear from the table that the tribal women in Tripura is percentage to only 12.9 which is very low compared to non-tribals with 41.7. Also it falls below overall North-east level percentage that is 24.1.

4. Morbidity and mortality due to other diseases: Our tribal women along with the rest of the population still suffer from communicable diseases like TB, Malaria, Typhoid, Gastroenteritis and other major health problems. Non communicable diseases like Diabetes, hypertension, coronary heart diseases and cancer are claiming many lives and the tribal women of our state are not an exception. How many of the women in our state even the educated and the elite group do regular health checkups?

Social Status of Women in Tripura

Tribal Women in Tripura are still shackled to traditions, customs, age-old superstitious and beliefs, orthodoxy, dogmatism like witch hunting and conservatisms. They remain suppressed by their husbands, in-laws, spend most of their time in household chores and remain economically dependent throughout their life and viewed as inferior in this male dominated society.

Age of marriage signifies the status of women. As per 2011 census report the mean age of marriage for the female was 19.3 on an average. In spite of the Marriage Act, rural tribal girls get married below 18 years of Age.

The political participation of tribal women in Tripura is given below:

Elected members in Gram Panchayat :

Year	Total seats	ST		ST	
		Male	Female	Total	Percentage
1994	5427	415	289	704	13%
1999	5685	157	129	286	5%
2004	5352	168	123	291	6%
2009	5259	187	103	290	6%

Source: Department of Panchayat, Govt. of Tripura.

Elected members in Panchayat Samiti:

Year	Total seats	ST		ST Total	Percentage
		Male	Female		
1994	196	13	13	26	13%
1999	299	15	11	26	9%
2004	299	10	5	15	5%
2009	299	5	10	15	5%

Source: Department of Panchayat, Govt. of Tripura

Elected Members in Zilla Parishads :

Year	Total seats	ST		ST Total	Percentage
		Male	Female		
1994	70	3	4	7	10%
1999	82	4	2	6	7%
2004	82	1	3	4	5%
2009	82	3	1	4	5%

Source: Deptt. of Panchayat, Govt. of Tripura

Elected Chairperson in Gram Panchayat:

Year	Total seats	ST		ST Total	Percentage
		Male	Female		
1994	525	111	55	166	32%
1999	537	41	31	72	13%
2004	513	13	13	26	5%
2009	511	19	7	26	5%

Source: Deptt. of Panchayat, Govt. of Tripura

Economic Aspects of Tribal Women in Tripura

Tribal women in Tripura as observed are generally economically dependent and backward. Economic independence alone is not sufficient to give women the strength needed to face the battle of life in the society. Even economically independent women have to depend on their parents or husbands or relatives for shelter. There are misconceptions that they are

not economically contributors. Female work participation is another indicator of tribal women's status in the society. Tripura is not the worst among major states of the Indian Union in terms of human development and gender equality but it ranks quite low. Tripura has largely rural agrarian economy, which is characterized by high rate of work participation of tribal women. Though Female Work Participation Rates (FWPR) is high in subsistence farming, still women do not benefit economically, though they share a disproportionate share of the work burden. The work participation rate of the tribal women in Tripura is considerably lower than that of men in general.

Self Help Groups (SHGs) formed by the state government and NGOs play an important role in women empowerment. Through SHGs the rural tribal women benefitted socially, psychologically and financially to some extent which adds to their empowerment level either as a group or individual. As per 2011 census the state holds 39,089 SHGs out of which 20, 956 are women SHGs. 15,321 are ST SHGs, 7,450 are SC SHGs, 2,846 are RM SHGs, 6,094 OBC SHGs and 8 731 others.

Legal Position of Tribal Women in Terms of Crime

Crime against tribal women is very much prevalent in Tripura especially in the rural areas. But in most of the cases the incidences are not highlighted in media. Any incident that gets highlighted in the media becomes an issue but the incidences of tribal women living in the remote areas were never covered because of remote interior or lack of tribal reporters. Also there is no proper documentation of such incidences. The cruelty against women is increasingly alarming in day to day life and specially during this modern era of development

through exploitation, molestation, rape, torture and domestic violence. Till date no much study has been found on the tribal women in the state in terms of crime against them. In this section of women crime, some of the highlights based on secondary data available from Crime in India 2013 statistics, National Crime Records Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, INDIA and Tripura State Women commission will give a glance through of our women status in term of crime.

Table:-1: Top 10 states highest in Rape Cases against women in India during 2013

Rank	States	Rate of Crimes
1.	Mizoram	17.80
2.	Sikkim	14.58
3.	Meghalaya	13.74
4.	**Tripura**	**12.84**
5.	Assam	12.65
6.	Arunachal Pradesh	12.42
7.	Madhya Pradesh	12.11
8.	Chhattisgarh	11.08
9.	Rajasthan	9.78
10.	Goa	9.67

Rate of total crimes = (Incidence of crimes against women / population of women in the State) X incidence of crime per one lakh female population.

Source: Crime in India 2013 statistics, National Crime Records Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, INDIA.

Table:-2: Top 10 states with highest Rate of Dowry Deaths in India during 2013

Table:-2: Top 10 states with highest Rate of Dowry Deaths in India during 2013

Rank	States	Rate of Crimes
1	Bihar	2.43
2	Haryana	2.36
3	Madhyapradesh	2.18
4	Uttar Pradesh	2.17
5	Jharkhand	1.95
6	Orissa	1.92
7	**Tripura**	**1.60**
8	Rajasthan	1.35
9	Assam	1.11
10	West Bengal	1.08

Rate of total crimes = (Incidence of crimes against women / population of women in the State) X incidence of crime per one lakh female population.

Source: Crime in India 2013 statistics, National Crime Records Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, INDIA.

Table-3: Top 10 states with highest in Cruelty by Husband and His Relatives in India during 2013

Rank	States	Rate of Crimes
1	Assam	56.39
2	**Tripura**	**45.59**
3	Rajasthan	44.92
4	West Bengal	40.78
5	Andra Pradesh	35.06
6	Haryana	29.86
7	Gujarat	27.11
8	Kerala	26.83
9	Maharashtra	15.41
10	Madhya Pradesh	13.94

Rate of total crimes = (Incidence of crimes against women / population of women in the State) X incidence of

crime per one lakh female population.

Source: Crime in India 2013 statistics, National Crime Records Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, INDIA.

Table-4: Complaints registered in Tripura Women Commission from 2011 to 2014

Sl. No.	Categories of complaints	No. of complaints received		
		2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
1	Adultery	45	29	30
2	Attempt to rape	10	03	05
3	Domestic Violence/ Matrimonial Dispute	427	337	354
4	Dowry Harassment	NA	98	107
5	Dowry Death	04	03	02
6	Kidnapping	11	08	02
7	Molestation/ Eve Teasing	15	16	18
8	Rape	07	06	13
9	Rape at Promising Marriage	18	15	13
10	Sexual Harassment at Work Place	04	01	0

Source: State Women Commission Tripura, 2014

The table-1 depicts the top ten states in India in terms of rape cases and Tripura ranks fourth position with 12.84 next to Meghalaya 13.74. It is observed that except Manipur and Nagaland the rest of the North Eastern states are among those top ten states in Rape case against women in India during 2003 crime record made by National Crime Records Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, INDIA. Table-2 illustrates the status of highest top 10 rate of dowry deaths in India during 2013. Tripura ranks seventh position with 1.60 next to Orissa 1.92. Here among the eight North eastern states only Assam and Tripura

stands to top ten highest rate of dowry deaths in India during 2013. Table -3 depicts the top ten states with highest in cruelty by Husband and his relatives in India during 2013. Among the top ten states Tripura stands to second position in terms of crime against women in cruelty by husband and his relatives next to Assam. When such level of crimes takes place in the society from their own family members what level of development we can even think of the women in the state. Table- 4 shows number of complaints registered in Tripura state women commission from 2011 to 2014. The complaints registered by victims to State Women Commission is completely separate from cases registered in police station and so let me make it clear that these cases are only of what was registered under state women commission of Tripura in table no.4. From table no.4 it is clear that domestic violence or matrimonial dispute is very high more than other components as mentioned in three different years.

Factors Affecting Development of Tribal Women in the State

Access to education for girls in some of the rural interior poor tribal families does not only rely on proximity of schools. Access to education is part of a larger structural concern, including the practice of son preference, which creates inherent discriminatory practices. With regard to son preference, boys are being sent to English medium schools and girls in Bengali medium. In some cases girls are not even encouraged to attend schools even after their admissions especially in the interior hilly villages. Education initiatives, therefore, cannot rely solely on building educational infrastructure, but also need to address some of the root causes of discrimination against boys and girls which affect the decisions made by

parents.

The impact of the patriarchal structure in Tripura Tribal community is seen in both rural and urban Tripura. Rural tribal women, as opposed to tribal women in urban settings, face inequality at much higher rates and in all spheres of life. Urban tribal women and, in particular, urban educated women enjoy relatively higher access to economic opportunities, health and education and experience less domestic violence. Tribal women (both urban and rural) who have some level of education have higher decision making power in the household and in the community. Furthermore, the level of women's education also has a direct implication on maternal mortality rates, nutrition and health indicators among children.

In rural areas, women's economic opportunities remain restricted by social, cultural, and religious barriers. Most notably inheritance laws embedded in Hindu culture continue to marginalize women in the household and the larger community. Rural tribal women have the lowest literacy rates, and therefore do not have the capacity to negotiate in any field of their life.

Women's security, decision-making power, and mobility are three indicators for women's empowerment. In Tripura, and more so for rural and less educated tribal women, these three indicators are significantly low. Mobility restrictions for women are dependent upon how the family and community view women's rights. They also, however, are intrinsically dependent on the prevailing levels of violence against women in the household and the community. Abuse and violence towards women is predominantly perpetrated within the household, and marital violence is among the most accepted by both men and women.

Suggestion

1. The educated tribal men and women need to come forward in addressing their issues to the larger section of the society. It is the urgent need and crisis of tribal people and the bigger responsibility lies with them in preserving and developing their own society.
2. Motivational and career guidance programmes should be organized for the Tribal students to encourage them in their education and assist them through proper counselling and guidance.
3. There should be more research studies conducted for the tribals particularly women and children.
   in the schools and colleges to make them effective mem bers of the society and the state Govt.should open more new English medium schools in the TTAADC areas.
5. Involvement of more pro - active role of Educational Institutions, Universities, NGOs and Community in addressing the status of tribal women in the state.
6. Tribal research institutes and state welfare departments should encourage the scholars and researchers for more analytical studies on the tribals of the state.
7. Proper documentation of tribal issues is another factor. Tribal students should be encouraged to go for studies on Journalism, Media and Mass communication. There are no active tribal reporters and writers in the state so far and so the young aspiring students should opt for such courses.
8. People contributing effortlessly on the studies of tribal society in Tripura should be appreciated by the State Tribal welfare department and State Govt. through recognitions

and appreciations to encourage more of their active participations.

Conclusion

Empowerment of tribal women in Tripura requires a crosscutting approach and one which addresses the diversity of social structures that govern women's lives. Until social, economic, political, education, health and legal issues are focused comprehensively; the desired outcome of empowering tribal women will not be achieved. It becomes all the more important as the need to identify the marginalized and the expansion of services to reach them. It is important that we move ahead from the welfare approach to the holistic empowerment approach as it is not about doling out services or resources to women, it's about their rights as well.

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Indegenous People and its Changing Face of Life (Status of Women in Uchoi Tribe)

Nivedita Dam

The beak of a bird like state of Tripura is one of the smallest state of India situated on the north east corner of the country lying within 22°56'N and 24°32'N latitude and 91°09'E and 91°91'E longitude. The state has a long history. The kingdom of Tripura included the whole of eastern region of Bengal from the Brahmaputra River in the north and the west, the Bay of Bengal in the south and Burma in the east during the 14th and 15th century. Some scholars believe that the ancient land of KiratBhumi, was named Tripura after the name of Tripura.But other historians hold that part of the Kirat country was known as Tripura long before the time of Tripura.

According to 1971 census, the total numbers of Tribal population in the state was 4,50,544 which rose to 9,93,426 person in 2001 and over 11 lakhs during 2011. There are 19 tribes in the state of Tripura. These are Tripuri, Reang, Jamatia, Chakma, Halam, Noatia, Mog, Lushai, Uchoi, Kuki, Garo, Munda, Oraon, Santhal, Khasai, Bhil, Chaimal, Bhutia, Lepcha. Out of these 19 different tribes, Tripuri, Noatia, Halam, Jamatia, Chaimal and Uchoi are the indigenous tribes of Tripura whereas Mog, Chakma and Kuki tribes settled afterwards. All the indigenous tribes are Indo-Mongoloids in origin. Excepting the

Garos and Khasis, the rest of the non indigenous tribes came to Tripura as tea garden labourers from Bihar. Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and ultimately many of them settled down here. The Garo and the Khasis belonging to the Indo-Mongloid racial origin came from the neighouring state of Meghalaya.

Since the seminar is emphasised on the Tribal Women of Tripura, I have rather centered my paper around a particular tribe, the Uchoi. With the wave of modernity the different tribal groups of the state are on the verge of losing their own identity and thus facing a fear of extinction in near future. The mad race of developing oneself and becoming more advanced to move with the present world, is posing a threat among the tribal groups in the state. Over time and space, these tribal people are trying to modify their living standards, their dress styles etc. Likewise, the Uchoi tribe, a very negligible and unnumbered one, is on the verge of totally losing its identity in the process of development. It is a real shock, that in the state where the population is more than 36 lakhs(2011 census), this tribe does not even numbers 2500. This handful tribe because of their negligible number fail to attract proper attention from all levels, be it goverment or private. As such this society is getting disoriented and dishevelled. Many in the past did drift away to other caste and communities to get benefits to lead a better life. It is a real pity that such a colourful and attractive society, though less in number is losing its foothold in the society.

Since there are no definite statistics regarding the various aspects of this tribe, maximum information gathered was primary dates i.e. personal interviews. Statistical methods and records from Census Books were absent. Only the population date was gathered from Census Book.

Since there is no histrionic fact behind the naming of the tribe "Uchoi", they have a similar folktale as that of the Tripuries, Jamatias etc. According to the ancient history, the Uchois followed the footsteps of the Reangs and reached the state of Tripura and they were given the title "Uchoi" by the then ruler of Tripura. Uchoi is a Kokborok word meaning "following the footsteps".

In the state of Tripura, the Uchois are concerntrated more in the South district, especially in Amarpur Sub division. They are also found sparsely in Belonia Sub division and Kanchanpur sub division. Under Amarpur Sub division, in Karbook Block, the Uchoi Para, Sambarai Uchoi Para, Ekchari Para, Mission Matai, Rangacherra, Shantinagar, Lampra Bazar, Borobari, Santrai Para, Dhanchandra Uchoi Para, Kheyi Uchoi Para, Chelagang, Dephacherra, Pashchim Manikya Dewan Para and Tuichakma. In the Belonia subdivison, Uchois are division, they are found in Dasda, Anandabazar, Kalapani and Tuishama village.But in this region, the number of Uchoi living are so less that these handful of them have converted to Reangs. These people are both Hindus as well Christians.In the state of Tripura according to the 1971 census the numbers of Uchoi residing was only 1061, which rose to 1306 in 1981in 1991 the number rose to 1637 persons and according to 2001 census the total Uchoi population was 2103 people. It constituted only 0.22% of the total population. Thus from the above data it is evident that the decadal growth of population among the Uchois is very negligible.It is interesting to note that among the Uchois, however negligible their growth rate is totally, the female growth rate is higher than their male counterparts. It is 1.60% as compared to 1.4% growth among the males.Their main eco-

nomic activity is Jhumibg and a very less percentage of population are employed in service sector. 75% of the total population is Christian, followed by Buddhist 15%, Hindus 7% and others 3%. Their main language is **'Koubru'** or **'Kokborok'**.This language is 'Koubru' or 'Kokborok'. This language belonged to the Bodo sect of Tibeto Burmese language.

The Uchois for generations have been following their own language, dress, code, customs and traditions, their faiths and beliefs for maintaining the cohesion in the society.But to move with time, they have discarded the old and absolute traditional views and by retaining the acceptable step and are working towards the proper development of the society. Accordingly in the year 1979, Srimat Akshayananda Bhante, the Buddhist monk, along with some representives from the Uchoi society consituted an organization called the **'Tripura Uchoi Jatini Ataibang'** in Dephachera village under Amarpur subdivision.The main aim of the organization was to look after the social, cultural, economic and educational development of the Uchoi society. It was in the Sanmelan of this organization that they decided to have a writer documentation of the customs and traditions, law and order of the Uchoi society. But the ethnic clash of 1980 totally ceased the working of this organization. Again the Uchoi society became disoriented. Then again in 1943, the organization started functioning under the aegis of some educated Uchoi's.Now the organization was constituted irrespective of religion. The highest position in the Uchoi society according to Ataibang is the 'Sarpa', who is elected though secret hallot. The present day Sarpa is Eradhon Uchoi. The spouse of the Sarpa is also revered in the same manner as

the Sarpa in the society. Mention may be made that the election for the post of Sarpa is held after every five years.Thus we see that in the Uchoi society, the woman were held in high esteem.Many social and cultural activities centred around the females of the society.

The Uchois being Mongoloid in origin, have well built and masculine body.The women are generally shorter in height than their male counterpart. But irrespective of their gender qualities, they are capable of doing hard work. Though the society is patriarchal in character, yet the women held an important and indispensible position in the society. The family relationship in the Uchoi society is centred and revoles around the father as well as the mother of the family.As such the boy is known by his father's lineage, the girl is known by her mother's lineage. As for example if a boy Paithkoma clan gets married to a girl of Kheyan clan, then the boy is known by the Paithokma clan and the girl by Kheyan clan.But their family relationship is not hampered by this.

All the economic activities are undergone jointly under the leadership of the father as well as the mother. Almost all the Uchois, irrespective of men and women, are habituated in smoking.Hookah made of bamboo is found in every household. There is no practice of stealthy smoking as such the father, mother, young and the old all smoke together without hesitation. In the recent time many Uchois do smoke bidis and cigarettes. However, the modern educated Uchoi boys try to reserve themselves from smoking in front of their mother, father and elderly people. This culture was adopted from the Bengali culture.

Like any other tribles, the Uchois also dress minimally.

Keeping in view with the social traditions, the Uchoi boys were not made to wear any clothes before they attained the age of 13 year.After the age of 13, they were given 'Kasha'to wear after performing a puja called **'Kebengbumi'**.But it is to be noted that the females were not restricted to wear 'Rignai' or 'Pachra' before the age of 13, but before using the 'Risa' or the'Breast cover' the 'Kebengbumi' puja has to be performed.But nowadays maximum of the Uchois are not following these customs and traditions. The Uckoi females weave their own 'Rignai' and 'Risa'.They also weave 'Khutai' a short blouse to cover their breast. In the Uchoi society both the girl and the boy attains the adulthood at the age of 13. It is then that the marriage proposals can be sent from both ends. The modern Uchoi society has changed with time regarding the customs and rituals of the marriage. The present age of the boy eligible for marriage is 21 and that of a girl is 18. The consent of both the boy and girl is necessary for fixing the marriage. No force is applied to either the boy or the girl regarding the acceptance of the proposal.

The Uchoi ladies like to decorate themselves with various types of ornaments. They were necklaces made of small beads known as 'lak' around their neck. Along with it they also wear garlands made of silver coins. Bangles known as 'Yas' and bracelets known as 'Otro' are worn in hands, 'Nabak' 'Uwak' and 'Uaare' are the different types of earnings being worn. A special type of hairpin made of iron, known as 'Sanga' are used for typing up their hair. Though the olderly Uchois still use the mentioned ornaments to adore themeselves, the modern Uchoi girls and ladies do not prefer to use such ornaments.

Another characteristic feature of the Uchoi society where

we see the females holding a good position is the practise of 'Chamari'. As per the tradition, after marriage the son-in-law has to stay in the house of his-in-laws for a period of about 4 years 4 months and 4 days and serve his-in-laws like a servant. He has to get up up early in the moring and provide his father-in-law

Conclusion

Thus from the above discussion it is evident that the indigenous Uchio society was basically a traditional society depending on nature to fulfil their basic needs. They were illiterate and poor. Because of its negligible number they were not paid due importance by the government from time to time. They were basically Hindu Baishnavities. But some 60-70 years back they embraced Christianity and irrespective of their gender, got converted so that they get themselves educated and lead a better life. Thus, 90% of the population in the present Uchoi society are literates and they venture out to adjacent states to get themselves educated and employed. The woman folk are also encouraged to do so.They were not confined within the four walls of their houses.They have shed their inhibitions and came forward to embrace the customs and traditions of many different societies they are in close proximity with. As evident, the Uchoi society has lots its lustre in the race of modernity. Their society is a liberal and open minded one were present Uchoi females do not even feel shy to say that they do not even wear their traditional attire and ornaments during marriage ceremonies. They have given up the traditionally and prefer wearing pants and tops, salwar kameez, saris, skirts etc. They have even given up wearing their traditional attire and ornaments during marriage ceremonies.They have give up the traditionality

and prefer wearing pants and tops, salwar kameez, saris, skirts etc. They have been given up wearing their traditional ornaments. Nowdays, the present Uchoi women are averse to such ornaments. They venture out to try their fate in many fields, be it working in the fields, imparting education, working in various other sectors hand in hand with the men folk. Such participation equally in building the society is a rare sight in the various tribal societies of the country. Thus we see that the women in the Uchoi society are and were empowered in the true sense. They were given full liberty to lead their own life.

Thus, it may be inferred that this small tribe, among the nineteen tribes of the state, needs to be addressed to so that it doesn't fear to loose its identity and existence. In this present century, where to existence of women in its present status is posing a real threat, the status of women in this small tribal group can set a very good example. The women in the Uchoi society were empowered from a very long time which is really a status to reckon with. In the ever declining sex ratio of the country as a whole, we see that this tribe has more female population than male. As the old saying goes that if the mother in the family is educated, then the whole family is educated. So also, if the women folk in a particular society are educated, that socicty is always development and advanced. Thus the government has to take various steps to help revive the lost glory of the Uchois so that they do not feel alien in their own homeland.

Suggestion

› To increase the growth of the Uchoi population, measures should be taken to make it mandatory on the part of the society to get the boys and girls marry within their own

caste.

› The drifting away of the Uchois to embrace different race should be checked with immediate effect and that the Uchoi Tribes should be provided with due opportunities as laid down by in our constitution.

› Better education facilities should be provided in the village itself so that they do not go out of their society to get education and on getting jobs outside, never return back to their native land.

› Employment opportunities should be created within the village boundaries.

› The all-round development of the Uchoi society must be addressed to round to and not in pockets.

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Political Participation of Tribal Women in Village Committee A Study in Tripura

Purbita Gupta

Abstract

Tripura is a small hilly state in North-Eastern region. Though it is tiny in geographical aspect but the state has an ample resource and it is famous for its rich cultural heritage. The total population of the state is 36,71,032 lakh and the total population of Scheduled Tribes is 11,66,813 lakh, which constitute 31.1% of total population. Tribals are famous for freedom-loving and politically conscious nature. Like other Tribal societies, the women of Tripura tribes play a vital role for the socio-economic development of their respective societies. The tribal women in Tripura are now participating in decision making process through the single-tier Local Self Governance i.e. Village Committee (VC) in TTAADC, a unique administration for overall development of indigenous group of people. The Tripura has set a precedent in empowerment of the fair sex by providing 50% women's reservation in both members and office-bearers positions in the three-tier panchayat system and single tier Village Council i.e. Village Committee. TTAADC consist of 527 Village Committee.

Women participate as a mere observant in the decision making process and majority of the decision been taken by male

members. Here the condition of tribal women is miserable. The reason may be lack of education, awareness, confidence, language etc. In spite of various problems it is fact that, active political participation of women irrespective of tribal and non-tribal is highly needed for the smoothening of decision making activity. If the habit of women participation in political process is increasing than women irrespective of rural and urban can easily share their problems and gradually their problems and demands came into the limelight. As a result women can achieve a pollution free society. So, women's participation in Local Self Governance is highly concentrated not only in political development but also the overall development of the people. A large number of tribal populations in Tripura are living under the area of TTAADC and 50% women reservation is established in single-tier village committee under ADC. So the present study emphasis on the Political Empowerment of Tribal Women in Village Committee, TTAADC, Tripura, India. Purposive Sampling is used for the study and it is based on primary data and Village Committees under West Zonal ADC area is partially covered and sixty women representatives (Chairman& Vice-chairman of Village Committee) are purposively selected to fulfil the major objectives of the pilot study.

The major findings stated that, political participation of tribal women in community level is very less even tribal women representatives are not aware about their responsibilities. They are powered their rights in black and white only as they are depending on their male representatives in village committee. The development of tribal community cannot be accelerated without participation of women. Therefore the government should focus on developing the literacy rate and proper orien-

tation training among the tribal women so that they can participate qualitatively.

Introduction

"when a woman moves forward,
then the entire family and village moves forward,
and when the village moves then the entire nation moves."

--- Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

Women are a consequential part of development process. According to World Bank, 2013 total female population of the country is 48.29 percent. With the progression of time, the contribution of women to family, society and nation has recognized and it is immensely increasing all over the world. The role of woman is not only bounded to the four walls of the household. She plays an important role both inside and outside her four walls. Women act as a multi dimensional role at a time; sometimes she plays a role of a mother, daughter, sister, wife, teacher, officer, politician, political activist and many more in development course. The glorious footsteps of women touch from health to education, nutrition to environment, and politics to development. Development of nation cannot be possible without development of women. This paper is an attempt to explore the participation of women in tribal rural local Self Government and problems faced by women representatives towards effective participation in rural local bodies for the upliftment of rural people especially rural women in Tripura.

Political participation of women in local Self Government is playing a lively role in overall development of women, irrespective of caste, color, creed and culture. The 73rd and

74th Constitutional Amendment Act 1993 provided the reservation of seats (at least one?third) for women in the local bodies of panchayats and municipalities. Another Constitutional Amendment (84th Constitutional Amendment Act 2001) reserving 33 percent seats in parliament and state legislatures. In a step towards women development and empowerment, Tripura cabinet has taken an namely decision to reserve 50 percent seats for women in three?tier Village Panchayats and Nagar Panchayats or Municipalities and it has been came into force in 2010 through Tripura Panchayat Amendment Bill 2010. The fifty percent reservation of women in Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) also came into force at the same time of Panchayat in Tripura.

Define Participation: According to Herbert MC. Closky (1968), "Participation is the principle means by which consent is granted or withdrawn in a democracy and the rulers are made accountable to the ruled". Political participation simply refers to the way through which the citizens of a country take part in the electoral as well as in policy making process. In other words, political participation is a way or a process through which the aspirations and needs of the people can be represented. Generally, the term "political participation" refers to those voluntary activities by which members of a society share in the selection of rulers and directly or indirectly in the formation of public policy. These activities include casting votes, seeking information, holding discussions, attending meetings, staging strikes and demonstrations, communicating with the legislators and the like. Political participation in any activity that shapes, affects or involves the political sphere. It ranges from voting to attending a rally to committing an act of terrorism to

sending a letter to a representative.

Section I

Political Participation of Tribal Women in Tribal Local Self-Governmcnt in India: Reflections of Sixth Schedule of Indian Constitution:

Presently women are in the position to think beyond the wall. Women have huge potentialities but they need to explore themselves through disseminate their ideas in different field. Scope is also required for women to share their knowledge; ideas and experience in society. A large number of women are now participating in various development areas through raising their voices against discrimination and injustice in social, economic and political spheres. India is the largest democracy in the world, where women constitute about half of the total population. The Constitution of India provides political rights to women by legitimizing their roles for participating in public life for the overall development and upliftment of grassroots level. From very beginning women have been participating as voters, as party workers, as leaders, as candidates contesting in elections, even they have been also participating as ministers, as MPs. But with a different time?period the way of women's political participation has been changed. India is the first country who had given the opportunities to create the environment of women's political participation at the grassroots. Sarmah (2012) reveals about Sixth Schedule that it is a comprehensive innovation of the Constitution of India and it is one of the important features of administration in the North-East India. The philosophy behind the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution is to preserve the democratic tradition, cultural diversity and to deal with the unique problems of the tribes of North-

East India with special kind of autonomous governance which protected tribal tradition, culture, and customary law and at the same time this kind of traditional governance can undertake development plans with participatory approach for the betterment of tribal people.

The Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India provides for the setting up of Autonomous Regional/District Councils in the four states of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura. These provisions have been made in exercise of the enabling provisions given in Article 244 (2) and 275 (1) of the Constitution. As stated in Article 244 (2), the tribal areas as specified by this Article in the states of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura are to be administered as per the provision of Sixth Schedule only. So provisions in the other parts of the Constitution, specially the part IX of the Constitution of India can have no connection with the administration of autonomous governance as autonomous decentralised institutions, also known as 'Special Purpose Vehicles' in India stated Mathur (2013), because these kind of institutions are created to provide a specific service to a specific group of beneficiaries for their overall development. Currently, ten Autonomous District Councils are functioning as a tribal rural local self-government in four states of North-East India under the Sixth Scheduled of the Constitution of India. The Sixth Scheduled is regarded as the mini-constitution within the main Constitution. It envisages the establishment of Autonomous District Councils (ADC) and gives them elaborate legislative, administrative and judicial powers. Name of the ten autonomous tribal local self Governments are: The Karbi Anglong District Autonomous Council, The Bodoland Territorial Areas District, Khasi Hills Dis-

trict Autonomous Council, Jaintia Hills District Autonomous Council, The Garo Hills District Autonomous Council, The Chakma District Autonomous Council, The Mara District Autonomous Council, The Lai District Autonomous Council and Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council. Apart from Sixth Schedule there is a provision of Fifth Schedule for Scheduled Tribes, but the Governments under Sixth Schedule are enjoys greater autonomy for greater specific tribes.

To provide an example of greater autonomy, Sarmah (2012) has chosen Tripura as an exemplary state in respect of representation in Village Councils. The state has taken an innovative measure to create elected and representative Village Councils. Unlike several other Autonomous Councils in the North-East India, the areas coming under Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) have village councils established under law and this district council constituted 527 Village Committees and election of these Village Committees was started from February 2006 as per Tripura Tribal Areas Act 1994.

The number of women representatives has increased rapidly after constitutional safeguards of PRI. A large number 7.24 lakh rural women have entered into the politics after 73rd Constitutional Amendment (1993) Act. The percentage of women representatives has changed drastically 1?2 percent to 25?40 percent after constitutionalization of Local self-Government.

Section II

Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) and its Structure: At a Glance

TTAADC was established as an autonomous council in 1982 after a series of tribal agitations in Tripura. It was constituted

through vote by secret ballot in the same year. The autonomous body was set?up under Article 244 of Indian Constitution and District Council was formed under Sixth Schedule of Indian Constitution. The fresh election of District Council has been held on January 30, 1985. The Council has 30 members: 28 elected and 2 nominated. 26 of the elected member seats are reserved for schedule tribes. The Executive Committee consists of 9 members including the CEM. Besides, there are 527 elected Village Committees and it was established through TTAADC (Establishment of Village Committee) Act, 1994 passed by the TTAADC and assent of the Governor was obtained on 28th February, 1994. Tripura is the single state in the country where Village Committee has been formed as a unit of local Self?Government under sixth schedule of Indian Constitution. Section 20 of the sixth scheduled provides the functions assigned to the Village Committee where total 17 items have been indicated in section 20(2). Accordingly the administration of TTAADC has devaluates the functions in grassroots local Self?Government.

The journey of TTAADC was historic in many ways. It was initially set up by the TTAADC Act?1979 under the seventh schedule of the Constitution of India. The TTAADC election was held on 3rd January, 1982. To acquire more power and autonomy, 49th Amendment, 1984 of the Indian Constitution came into force for provided the provisions of Sixth Schedule to the tribal areas of the state of Tripura. The Amendment also provided for the application of the Acts of Parliament and of the Legislature of the State of Tripura to the autonomous district and autonomous regions in the State. After finished all the legal formalities, TTAADC came under the ambit of Sixth

Schedule of the Indian Constitution on 23rd August, 1984 and finally TTAADC election was held on 30th June, 1985. It is an institution of rural local Self? Government along with financial, administrative and legislative powers on specific subjects.

Structure of Tribal Rural Local Self-Government:

The name of rural Local self-Government is differed from one state to another. In sixth scheduled areas Village Panchayat is known as 'Village Committee'. In intermediary level it is Block Advisory Committee (BAC) consisting of all the elected Chairpersons of the Village Committees within the block under the chairmanship of an elected member of the TTAADC. TTAADC is the top most of these tiers. Chairman and Vice-chairman are the head of tribal rural local bodies.

As rural local bodies Village Committee's has specific powers and functions and these are as follows:

1. The Village Committee shall initiate the development schemes for their village areas on the control and guidance of the Executive Committee.
2. The Village Committee may exercise all or any of the following functions:

   i. Sanitation and conservancy of the village areas

   ii. Cleaning and maintaining of village roads and paths

   iii. Construction and maintenance of Rest house in the village

   iv.Maintenance of children, adult and women education

   v. Construction, maintenance and improvement of well and tanks for the purpose of drinking, bathing and washing of the villagers.

Section III

Political Participation of Tribal Women in Village Committee of Tripura:

Women in Tripura have a long and colourful political history as it was started from Ganatantrik Nari Samiti, the largest and most organized women organization was formally constituted in 1951. Before that, organized tribal women had participated in democratic movement under the banner of Gana Mukti Parishad and fought against the misrule of region of Tripura Manikya ruler. In the year 1949, tribal women faught against the 'Titun Pratha' under which the tribal people were forced to pay a tax in grain to the ruler. During the uprising against the most oppressive Titun Pratha, the tribal women had also taken an active part in the struggle and militantly fought against this cruel system. Consequently, the three tribal women leaders - Kumari, Madhuti and Rupasree were shot dead by the police firing. This struggle created history in the democratic movement of Tripura. Not only Kumari? Madhuti? Rupasree, a large number of tribal women were active in the movement. According to Bhattacharyee (2008) tribal women who participated in the struggle were initially not politically activists but subsequently many of them joined direct politics. Kiran Mala Debbarman was one of them who were elected through the Electoral College in 1952 and she was the first women in Tripura to contest the elections. She was nominated by the undivided Communist Party of India (CPI) and elected by the people, which was a great opportunity for women and participation in the political process. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment (1993) Acts seem to have been effective, as it was made a provision for the participation of women in

rural local bodies and through this system millions of women enter into public space for the first time. Three tier panchayat systems was introduced in Tripura in 1994 and it is one of the exemplary state in respect of political participation of women as the state reserved 50 percent seats for women in place of 33 percent in three?tier Panchayats and TTAADC, a unique administration for overall development of indigenous section. 50% reservation was provided to women at all levels, i.e. Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad, earlier it was 33.33%. Village Committee is the grassroots level local self-government in TTAADC and it was formed through Village Committee Act 1994. The first, second and third Village Committee elections were held in 2006, 2011 and 2016 respectively.

Table 1: Elected Women Representatives in Village Committee as on 2011

Sl. no	No. of Village Committee	No.of Chairpersons	No. of Vice-chairperson	Women Chairperson	ST Women Chairmen	SC Women Chairperson	UR Women Chairperson	Elected Women Member	Elected ST Women	SC Women Member	UR Women Member
1	527	527	527	288	273	09	06	1886	1686	60	140

Source: Department of TTAADC, Khumwlung

Table 2: Representation of Women Chairman in Village Committee in different Zone's of Tripura in 2011

Zone	Women	Total no. of Chairman	Percentage
West	94	185	50.81
South	83	167	49.07
Dhalai	48	96	50
North	39	79	49.36
Total	**264**	527	**50.09**

Source: TTAADC, Khumulung

SECTION IV

Empirical Study

Tripura is one of the pioneering states of India to reserve 50 percent seats for women in place of 33 percent in rural local Self?Government with the aim to increase status of women in respect of political, social, educational and cultural. Moreover, people of the state are also politically sensible and therefore state has given priority to women in political arena. In this point of view, the study was conducted with the aim to study the political participation elected representatives in Village Committee of Tripura.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the socio?economic and political background of the respondents.
2. To know the level of participation among women in PRIs and sixth scheduled areas in Tripura.
3. To identify the motivational factors depends on the participation of women in politics

Study Area

West and Sepahijala district were selected for the study. Village committees were covered from Mandwi, Belbari, Old Agartala, Jirania, Hezamara, Nalchar, and Mohanvog RD Block.

Sample Size: Total 60 (sixty) number of women representatives were purposively selected for the study.

Sampling Methodology:

Purposive Sampling Methodology was used for the study.

Methods of Data Collection:

Secondary Data: Secondary information were collected from various published books, journals, newspaper articles, census report, Tripura Human Development Report, internet

etc. Data were gathered from the Department of TTAADC Khumulung, and various R.D.Block etc.

Primary Data: Primary Information was collected through Pre-structured schedule.

Major Findings

ò Educational level of women representatives were very poor and minimum 43.3 percent representatives were educated up to elementary level, moreover 26.6 percent representatives could not write their name properly.

ò 81.6 percent representatives were married; simultaneously 13.3 percent representatives were widow.

ò 46.6 percent and 53.3 percent representatives were APL and BPL cardholder respectively.

ò Agriculture was the main source of family income and its percentage was 63.3.

ò 40 percent women representatives were belong from the age group of 36 to 45 years followed by the 25 to 35 years age group.

ò Women reservation in politics was not the best medium for empowerment and it was agreed by 46.6 percent representatives.

ò Motivational factors are mainly depend on the extrinsic and intrinsic feeling. 56.6 percent party leaders were played as a motivational role. Similarly, no one had found as a self motivator in case of joining politics.

ò Lack of education or poor understanding level was the main problem of women representative. Out of 60 representatives total 41 numbers of women were faced this problem.

ò More than half of representatives i.e. 56.6 percent were engaged as a fresh candidate, at the same time 43.3 percent were

belongs from the old group means they were elected in 2006 election also.

ò Panchayat work related training was highly required for 19 representatives followed by the subject of training with kokbarak language in SIPARD and other places.

ò 53.3 percent representatives had no political background

ò 65 percent representatives were regularly attended in the meeting; on the other hand, 15 percent were not attended in the meeting regularly due to some problem.

ò 63 percent women village committee representatives were fully dependent on their male counterpart related to various official works.

Suggestions

The following suggestions may strengthen women participation in rural local bodies in Tripura:

ò Active participation in official meeting must be increase and it should be ensured in government level.

ò Training should be arranged in locally and it should be qualitative rather quantitative.

ò Language of Training and the trainer should be an expert of both Bengali and Kokbarak.

ò The training should include the philosophy as well as administration of Village Committee under TTAADC. On the other hand, attention must be paid to the development of inter-personal communication skills amongst the trainees.

ò Training regarding to the roles and duties of local government and issues related to rural development programmes must be highlighted.

ò Government and non-government organisations should try to

focus on the educational level of village committee representatives through special educational campaign and awareness programme in locality.

ò Government must arrange yearly exposure visit in neighbouring states like Manipur, Mizoram, Sikkim and Assam for increase the knowledge and experience of representatives.

ò Dependency on male members of women representatives must be decreased.

ò Awareness and capacity building programme for elected representatives must be arranged locally in a regular basis. Emphasis need to be given on constitutional safeguards of scheduled areas.

ò The political parties should focus on educational qualification of women representatives,especially tribal at the time of their selection in general election.

ò Mass media can play an important role for awareness generation and motivation of women members and also to make them update with the local as well as regional, national and international news.

Conclusion

The average girl children are never considered as asset in Indian society till today. In patriarchal society girls are always treated as neglected under the dominance of man. "Grant me a son and girls elsewhere" was the prayer found in Arthaveda. The newly married bride and every woman were offered only one blessing- 'May you be the mother of hundred sons'. But why woman are so neglected? What are the reasons behind it? No one can give the complete answer because mind setup, beliefs and practises behind the girl child is completely different from each other.

Women, an important segment of the society, play multiple role, whether visible or not, in society and history. But due to various causes this important segment of society is in a disadvantageous position in most of the countries, especially in the Third World countries. To overcome the present crisis, the empowerment of women from all sides is the urgent need. In present days, women irrespective of caste, creed and culture are actively participating in developmental process and move forward for lab to land and land to lab. Like other activities, women from grassroots level are highly participating in decision making process from PRI to ADC and 50% women reservation are now exist in both the system. Women in the age of 25 to 35 are the focussed group for being a representative in local bodies' means a half of women representatives are now join in political process. The scenario of tribal and non-tribal women in Tripura are also the same, they are joining and participating in various aspects of their political life but still there is a gap. Lack of education and consciousness creates the gap between the system and representatives. There is no doubt, that the state has quantitative representative rather than qualitative, but this is the time to make the representation more qualitative and in this context Government intervention especially in the field of education is highly needed.

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Empowerment of Tribal Women through Physical Education & Sports with Special Reference to Tripura

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Introduction

India is amongst the fastest growing countries in the world today, with a GDP growth rate of more than 8% during the XI plan period. This high level of growth can, however, be sustained only when all sections of the society, specially women become equal partners in the development process. Empowerment of women is a socio-political ideal, encompassing notions of dignity and equality, envisioned in relation to the wider framework of women's rights. It is a process of gaining control over self, over resources and over existing societal perceptions and attitudes and would be achieved only when an improvement in the 'condition' of women is accompanied by an advancement in their 'position' by enlarging the economic, social and political freedoms and choices available to them.

The National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, 2001 views empowerment as an enabling process that must lead to their economic as well as social transformation. Government has sought to operationalise this approach through legislative and programmatic interventions as well as by mainstreaming gender into the development planning process.

Numerous such initiatives were taken during the XI plan period. These initiatives need to be consolidated and built on during the XII Five Year Plan to enable women to challenge and change the contexts in which they live.

Understanding the importance of Female Empowerment in Sports.

Tripura a hilly and oldest state in the North Eastern region of India is the home land of different tribes. Altogether there are 19 (nineteen) tribes in the state. They could be divided into 2(two) major groups as (i) Aboriginal and (ii) Immigrants. All the aboriginal tribes have been migrated in this territory from a place between Tibet, up hills of Myanmar Like Arakan rills Tracts and shan state adjacent of China. According to 1981 census 28% Tribles of Total population, under this aboriginal tribes Tripuri 58% , Reang 14%, Jamatia 08%, Noita 0.2%, Lusia 0.1%, Halam 04%, Kukis 0.2%, Mog 0.2% and Chakma 0.6%. Accordin to New Census 2011 Total population of Tripura is 36,71,032 Lakhs out of total population of ST are 11,66813. Due to social transition in all sheres of life particularly in the Field of Agriculture, Socio-cultural life, economic life, educational sector and health awareness and progress in all walk of life. Total Tribal women literacy rate are gone up 71.6 which is the recent year literacy rate.

Sports is one of the means to empower women/ girls to expedite the multi-dimensional social process and economic strength for developing confidence in their own capacities. It gives the basis by which women challenge gender based discrimination, violence against them in all institution and structures of the society. In Tripura through physical education and sports, tribal women have succeeded in their life through

participation in physical education and sports, Para-military and others state govt. services. Tribal women have proved themselves in all spheres of life and they need to be empowered in all walk of life. In-order-to fight against the socially constructed gender biases, women have to swim against the system that require more strength. Such strength comes from the process of empowerment and empowerment will come from the sports activities and participation.

Methodology

Tripuri youths have their traditional games and sports. But it deserver special mention here that the traditional sports of the Tripuris are almost in common with other tribes of Tripura. Now a - days through the Tripuri youth have adopted the other castes games and sports but still they are very much involved in this 20th Century, is their tradition sports and games. At least once in a blue moon. Out of many traditional sports and games of the Tripuri Community, some importante games & Sports are mentioned below.

Sources

i) Primary Sources : Sports directorate , Tribal Research and Cultural Institute Library.

ii) Secondary Sources : Various texts, Reference books, Internet and various Published Journals and Reports.

These are called the games as 'Thoonga' means collection of many Tribal Games.

Near about 10 Traditional games played by Tripuri Tribals. Which shown the ability, strength, unity will play of this community.

1. Mufuk Saganang :- This game is played to test the

strength & power of chest of a young man/ women.

2. Musta Scglaio :- This game is played between two individuals to test their strength of wrist.

3. Owabai Fan Salaio :- This is a pole wrestling played by two individuals.

4. Longgai Chakmani :- The Swinging game is played by the Tripuri youth.

5. Achugoi phan Solaimani :- A type of wrestling. It is played by the two young men to test their strength.

6. Solaimani :- According to Tripuris 'Solaimani' means wrestling. This is free hand wrestling, which is common to all other community.

7. Ramtan Lairo :- This game is played to test the ability of an individual.

8. Dukhai Satana :- 'Dukhai Satana' means tug of war. Tow groups check own power.

9. Khailaio :- Sometimes, the Tripuri boys play a game of bull fighting.

10. Sukui Thungmani :- They used to play this game with the seeds of a wild creeper bean (Sukui). In modern time this is known as a ball games.

In Chakma language, the term of game are known as 'Khara' more than three / Four traditional games played by Chakmas. Those are given below.

1) **Kani-dola-mela-meli Khara :-** Above words means a ball made of Clothes. And 'mela' means throwing. With this ball one should heat the other by throwing. This game played by Chakmas.

2) Nadeng Khara :- 'Nadeng' is a spinning top mode of hard wood.

3) Ghila Khara :- This is the most popular game among the chakma youths, during Bizhu festival.

Thus, it is learnt form investigation that a few games are quite uncommon to the present generation of the Tripuri Community & others though once upon a time these games were played by their fathers and forefathers. Due to free mixing of other neighbouring caste and because of the impact of urbanization and globalization, the traditional sports of Tripuri community are losing popularity.

Though the present tribals of Tripura's boys and girls are not totally in touch with their traditional sports they have got attachment with modern sports and games. The schools, colleges, the local clubs and the neighbours of the tribals are extending their helping hand to make the tribal children and youths familiar with the modern sports world.

Data Analysis & Findings

Achievements in sports-games by Tripura tribal women

1) **Himadri Debbarma** is a first Golden girls of Tripura in the year of 1970. Which collect 4 gold medal in school National games Swimming (200 mt. Back strock New Record holder). At present she is posted in (ICA) Publicity Deptt. Tripura.

2) **Nitam Bani Jamatia** - Gold medalist in Swimming. All India Rural compt. At present posted in Youth-Affairs & Sports Dept. Tripura.

3) **Chaiti Debbarma** (Swimmers) First tribal girl of Tripura (India) had successfully crossed over the gulf of Torrunousin Greece. Gulf International)

More than Three International Sports Participations of above said Women's Players.

4) Kabari Debbarma - (National meet participation in 1975 several times Medal winner in Gymnastic. At present Asst. Director of Sports Tripura.

5) Devabhakti Jamatia (20 Medal winner in National Level 1979 Athletic At present posted in (F.C.I.)

6) Basanti Debbarma Athletic 3 K.M. Cross Country National Medalist.

7) Tanuja Debbarma (1977-78 Athletic National meet)

8) Narsiama Darlong Athletic 1978 Gold medal National School Gold Medalist.

9) Ruma Debbarma (Football) Represent India.

10) Bokul Rani Debbarma (Football) Under 13-14 Asian Football Champ.2009-10 Participation.

8 Girls from Jampuijala recruited in Tripura Police under Sports Cota.

11) Laxmiti Reang U/16 India Goalkeeper. Football - 2016

12) Rita Debbarma - Cricket National Level Player. (Under 19 Captain)

13) Shilpi Debbarma - Cricket National Level Player.

14) Indarani Jamatia - Cricket National Level Player.

15) Jyotica Chakma - (Sports officer) First Women From Tripura Completed MP.Ed. from LNUPE.

16) Jimi Debbarma (6 times National Junior Swimming Particifpation) **MP.Ed. & PGDY from Lonawala (Puna). At presented posted in Kandriya Vidyalaya.**

17) Radha Halam, Judo North East Place Holder.

18) Dipa Chakma First Girl from Tripura represented National Lawn Tannic Tournament.

Finding related to Physical Education specially ST

Women Enrolment in Tripura.

Class 12th Higher Secondary level ST Women Student taken Physical Education.

Year	1990-91	1992-93	1994-95	1996-97	1999-2000
Nos.	12	13	07	09	14

University Level Physical Education College (D.P.Ed/ B.P.Ed) Record Collecting from Regional College of Physical Education Panisagar, Tripura.

Year	1990-91	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1996-1997	1999-2000	2006-2007
Nos	12	13	27	07	09	07	11

All the above mentioned women players are coming from village areas with poor or middle class families, but due to sports achievement they make a separate platform under socio-cultural & economical basis. So that we can say Physical education and sports should be given a chance to be encouraged and to develop confidence in themselves and we can see some findings which is given below.

Recommendation / Conclusion

After the observation of above data, we can say that this is not up to mark as far as Tripura is concerned in a traditional Games Sports. Govt. of Tripura Higher Education Dept. already started Physical Education subject in 11 Degree Colleges. Tripura University also stated in M.P.Ed Course for the development of sports and Games in School, College Level in Tripura. More development must required at educational level. According to the India Human Development Report, 2011 give the suggestion, higher enrolment required. This needs to be addressed to enable women to access education that gives them employability.

The U.N.O have prioritized gender equality and empow-

erment of women in their Millennium Development Goals, (2012-15) Where games by sport is also one of the parameter for the women empowerment.

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